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The Council on Appalachian Women:
Short Lived but Long Lasting

A thesis
presented to
the faculty of the Department of Liberal Studies
East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment
of the requirement for the degree
Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies

by
Julie M. Blevins
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Dr. Marie Tedesco, Chair
Dr. Jill LeRoy-Frazier
Dr. Martha Copp

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ABSTRACT

The Council on Appalachian Women:

Short Lived but Long Lasting

by

Julie Marie Blevins

In October 1976, approximately 200 women from seven states met in Boone, North Carolina, at the National Advisory Council on Women's Education. In December 1976, thirty-five of these women met again at Mars Hill College and created a non-profit organization, the Council on Appalachian Women, advocating the advancement of women's education, services, and research to benefit women in the Appalachian region. During its four-year existence, the Council held a total of 71 public forums on Appalachian women's issues. Members worked to promote child development, maternal and infant health care, employment training, and education for women. The Council on Appalachian Women understood the obstacles and embraced the people of the region and served as an example of how to effect change for women in the rural Appalachian South. The organization disbanded in May 1981.

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DEDICATION

To Lewis E. Tolley

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to all the members of my thesis committee for your help and patience during this endeavor. Thank you to my husband and two wonderful sons, Matthew and Bradley.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING THE COUNCIL ON APPALACHIAN WOMEN

I believe Appalachia can go beyond playing catch-up; that the day will come when the people of Appalachia will blend the best of the new and the old, of rural and urban, in a balanced development that will offer more attractive communities than we now know, in or out of Appalachia.

— Robert W. Scott, Federal Co-Chairman, *Appalachian Regional Commission*

Growing up in a family of eleven in the foothills of Roan Mountain State Park in the small rural town of Roan Mountain, Tennessee, has prepared me quite well for researching poverty and reform within the Appalachian region. Since I began my college career, I have been drawn to classes that discussed topics concerning poverty and women's issues, such as the feminization of poverty, job discrimination, harassment, and sexual abuse. I have also been very interested in the common stereotypes that consider the people of Appalachia as backwards and uneducated. My interest carries to such topics as classism and discrimination against individuals on the bases of race, class, and gender. My initial interest in the causes of poverty, such as lack of educational opportunities, limited healthcare resources, and limited employment options within the region led me to focus my research on poverty and gender issues and research the history of the War on Poverty in the 1960s, as well as the reform movements in the 1970s. It was during this search that I began looking at the Archives of Appalachia to learn about the Council on Appalachian Women. The biographical note regarding the Council on Appalachian Women (CAW) held the most interest for me because of its emphasis on women in the region and its focus on education and job training efforts for women. After numerous trips to the Archives of Appalachia, during which I sorted through box after box of materials from departmental

minutes, newspaper clippings, letters and correspondence, address lists, board meetings, annual reports, and other publications, I formed a good understanding of CAW, a women's reform group founded in 1976 at Mars Hill College, in Mars Hill, North Carolina, and its mission to uplift the women of Appalachia.¹

In order to appreciate the contributions of the Council on Appalachian Women as a "mountain reform" movement in the region, one must first understand the goals of the council: to be an advocate for the collection of data and statistics regarding women, to offer educational and job training courses for women in the region, to change perceptions and stereotypes of those living in the region by outsiders, and to establish centers dedicated to preserving information regarding the traditions, values, history, and cultural identity of the region. The old idiom, "Anything worth having is worth fighting for," rang true for the women of CAW and their struggle to gain recognition for the contributions of women and women's work. Other primary goals that CAW members worked on were equality and fair wages, equal access to education, and demonstrating the wealth of knowledge the region has to offer as well as gain. CAW provided many educational opportunities for women to pursue education by offering scholarships for women in general management, business, professional certification in teaching, nursing, and many other fields. CAW also offered classes in construction and auto mechanics, all of which opened doors for women to gain entry into male-dominated fields. CAW's main emphasis was on educating individuals within the region as well as educating individuals outside of the region about the region, its resources, beliefs, artwork, and most importantly the resilient, hard-working, people.

¹ Collection Guide, Council on Appalachian Women, 1958-1981, Archives of Appalachia, East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee.

The goal of this thesis is to shed light on the contributions of the Council on Appalachian Women to the reform movements of the twentieth century and its work offering job training, educational opportunities, health and nutritional training, counseling, and support to women in the rural Appalachian region. The thesis will also briefly mention how the council tackled such controversial issues as teenage pregnancy, birth control, and domestic abuse. This thesis demonstrates how the Council on Appalachian Women also worked to achieve additional goals to overcome the stereotypes of the region, the view of “a woman’s place” as in the home, the isolated conditions, and the lack of opportunity in the region in order to effect positive changes in the lives of women.

The thesis opens with a historical discussion of the Appalachian region and the stereotypes of the region in order to provide the reader with the necessary background to understand the obstacles the Council on Appalachian Women faced when deciding to tackle reform in the mountains of rural North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and other states within the Appalachian Region, as well as outside the region. I draw extensively from David Whisnant’s *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia*, and John Glen’s “The War on Poverty in Appalachia: Oral History from the ‘Top Down’ to the ‘Bottom Up’,” I also review Dwight Billings and Kathleen Blee’s work *The Road to Poverty: the Making of Wealth and Hardship in Appalachia* and Mary Anglin’s article, “Lessons from Appalachia in the 20th Century: Poverty, Power, and the Grassroots,” in order to provide information regarding poverty, the history of the region, and reform. These sources provide historical, statistical, and demographic information on the region. These sources also provide information regarding the discussion of persistent poverty within the region, and the reform efforts to eliminate it.

The next chapters discuss three reform movements (the Hindman Settlement School that was founded in 1902, the Frontier Nursing Service, established in 1925, and the Pine Mountain Settlement School founded in 1913) that were founded prior to the establishment of CAW and the possible lessons CAW took from these organizations. The thesis then presents an analysis of the three movements and discussion of the strategies each used to achieve their goals in the reform of education and healthcare in the Appalachian region and how the Council on Appalachian Women was similar to the earlier movements.

Chapters Four and Five draw extensively from the Council on Appalachian Women Collection housed in the Archives of Appalachia. These chapters also cover the seminars and symposia offered by CAW and CAW's work to rally support for bills regarding women's rights, such as the Fraser-Keyes Bill, which became part of the Equity in Social Security for Individuals and Families Act and which allows a widowed woman to continue to manage her "family farm" (for estate purposes). Chapter Five focuses on the dedication of the Council on Appalachian Women to educating, overcoming stereotypes, and creating centers for the preservation of the beliefs, values, art, music, and traditions of the Appalachian people. The final chapter deals with the contributions and the legacy of the Council on Appalachian Women.

CHAPTER 2

STICKS AND STONES: THE APPALACHIAN REGION AND STEREOTYPES

It is ironic that a region for so long characterized by a single stereotype is actually almost too diverse to generalize about all.

— David Whisnant, *Modernizing Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia*

When examining the history of CAW and its ability to achieve the establishment of a central office, the creation of a much needed communication network in such a large and diverse area and its ability to educate, one must first study the region, its economic status in the nation, and the stereotypes associated with the residents of the region. All three must be understood in order to appreciate the assistance CAW sought to offer. CAW was able to achieve the goals set by its founders by including the individuals living within the communities in the implementation of the services offered. It worked with area church groups and community organizations to form a network of support. CAW members also went into small rural communities to meet with the women and understand their needs. It researched the problems within a community and offered assistance based on the information provided by the women within the communities regarding whether financial support, legal assistance, childcare, job training, or other types of support was needed. CAW also strived to understand the traditions and values that the women and men of the region held and took them into consideration when organizing classes and seminars on traditions, education, religion, and mountain life.

The Appalachian region, as defined by the Appalachian Regional Commission, is a 205,000-square-mile region that spans from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and parts of twelve other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky,

Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. The region includes 420 counties scattered across the thirteen states listed above and is home to 24.8 million people.¹ The majority of the 420 counties (301 out of 410) are classified as non-metropolitan and 42 percent of the region's population is rural, compared with 20 percent of the national population.²

The region is divided into five parts: Northern, North Central, Central, South Central, and Southern and includes the Blue Ridge Mountains, Greater Appalachian Valley, and Allegheny-Cumberland Belt. John Campbell focused his work around the Southern Highlands, a region that extends from New York to Alabama and within its boundaries are included, “the four western counties of Maryland; the Blue Ridge, Valley, and Allegheny Ridge counties of Virginia; all of West Virginia; eastern Tennessee; eastern Kentucky; western North Carolina; the four northwestern counties of South Carolina; northern Georgia; and northeastern Alabama.”³ CAW’s focus areas were primarily centered within the Southern Highlands and much of the organization’s attention was centered in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia but also extended to other states within the Appalachian region.⁴

Throughout my studies one theme remained consistent regarding the Appalachian region, the discussion of poverty in the region. In the 1960s, the region was brought to

¹ Appalachian Regional Commission, “The Appalachian Region.”
http://www.arc.gov/appalachian_region/TheAppalachianRegion.asp (accessed September 14, 2011).

² Ibid.

³ John C. Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and His Homeland* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1969), 10. Original publication date 1921 by the Russell Sage Foundation.

⁴ Appalachian Regional Commission, “The Appalachian Region,” (accessed September 14, 2011).

national attention with the declaration by Lyndon B. Johnson to wage war against poverty in Appalachia. The roots of the war on poverty actually began before the presidencies of Lyndon B. Johnson or John F. Kennedy. Beginning in the 1930s with the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt (1932–1945) and continuing through the presidencies of Harry Truman (1945 -1953), and Dwight Eisenhower (1953 – 1961), these prior presidents began programs that would eventually lead to Medicare, the development of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and other programs geared towards combating poverty.⁵

Years before our presidents openly acknowledged that poverty was a problem for the Appalachia, and throughout the United States, year's before Johnson's war cast its shadow over the region, researchers such as John Campbell were waging another type of war, the war against the stereotypes of the region. Campbell, who wrote about the Appalachian region in 1921, helped provide a different view of the mountaineer that contradicted popular stereotypes of the "hillbilly" mountain people. He stated that the "lack of information about the region has left the area open to misinterpretations and misunderstanding."⁶ He also wrote "Appalachia is a land about which, perhaps, more things are known that are not true than any part of our country."⁷ Campbell was commissioned in 1908 by the Russell Sage Foundation, established by Margaret Olivia Sage

⁵ David Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 93.

⁶ Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and his Homeland*, 10.

⁷ Ibid., 10.

in 1907, to conduct a survey of conditions in Appalachia.⁸ Campbell aided in the creation of a central repository of data concerning social and economic conditions in the mountains and his work paved the way for folk schools, agricultural cooperatives, handicraft guilds, the frontier nursing service, better roads, and many other reform efforts. Most importantly he chose to combat the stereotyping of the region and, although his research centered on West Virginia, his work allowed people everywhere to relate to the people of West Virginia (and Appalachia) and see them as the same as they were.⁹

This new identity for West Virginians and the broader Appalachian population brought awareness for the region to a new level. This new awareness helped condition Americans to “accept the problems of the region as problems for the nation.”¹⁰ This new awareness also helped founders of the Hindman Settlement School, founded in 1902, the Pine Mountain Settlement School, founded in 1913, and the Frontier Nursing Services, established in 1925, gain support and funding for educational services, healthcare programs, and assistance organizations in the region.¹¹ Despite Campbell’s efforts to dispel negative stereotypes in the early 1900s, the War on Poverty and the images broadcast during the 1960s once again cast a dark shadow over the region. According to Diane Nelson Jones, *Post-Gazette* writer in 2000, the War on Poverty began on April 24, 1964, when President Lyndon B. Johnson “leapt over a gullyful of water into Tommy Fletcher’s yard

⁸ The Russell Sage Foundation, “History of the Foundation”. <http://www.russellsage.org> (accessed May 1, 2012).

⁹ Campbell, *The Southern Highlander and his Homeland*, 10.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ John M. Glen, “The War on Poverty in Appalachia: Oral History from the ‘Top Down’ and the ‘Bottom Up’,” *The Oral History Review* 22, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 71.

along Route 3 in Inez, Kentucky. Standing in Fletcher's front yard, Lyndon Johnson declared, "I have called for a national war on poverty. Our objective: Victory."¹² This war thrust Appalachia into the national spotlight and brought millions of dollars in federal aid to the Appalachian region. This 'war' also made it possible for organizations such as the Council on Appalachian Women to gain the funds needed to establish an office in rural North Carolina and begin assistance programs for the women of the region.¹³ Although CAW did not directly announce that its efforts would focus on combating poverty, the programs offered by CAW, specifically job training and educational courses, helped many women earn a living wage and escape the hold that poverty had on the region, especially its women and children.

Poverty was a popular topic for many researchers and scholars during this time and individuals such as John Glen, author of "The War on Poverty in Appalachia: Oral History from the "Top Down" and the "Bottom Up," began writing about the region. Glen identified several sources of authority (those who designed the initiative, those who attempted to carry it out, and those who were supposed to benefit from it) that contributed greatly to the understanding of the true causes of poverty in the region during this so-called war and worked to combat these causes of poverty, not label the people they affected. Glen listed several programs that appeared within months of Johnson's signing of the Economic Opportunity Act in 1964. Among them were the Neighborhood Youth Corps, Adult Basic Education, Head Start, and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) and

¹² Diane Nelson Jones, "Appalachia's War: The Poorest of the Poor Struggle Back," *Post-Gazette*, Sunday, November 26, 2000.

¹³ John Glen, "The War on Poverty in Appalachia," 69.

discussed how these programs were limited by political involvement, local leadership, businesses within the region, budget cuts, and regulations set by funding agencies.¹⁴

Many authors such as Harry Teter, William Shamblin, Allen Batteau, and many others, who followed in Campbell's footsteps, worked to recreate the beauty of Appalachia and showcase the people, crafts, music, poetry, and traditions of the region. This "new understanding" by those outside Appalachia allowed them to show their support for reform efforts within the region including educational reform, healthcare initiatives, the Economic Opportunity Act, and Lyndon Johnson's war. The millions of dollars brought into the region after the announcement of the War on Poverty was used to build and renovate schools, offer training programs, educational scholarships, and other types of assistance. For example, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 "declared it the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."¹⁵ This new era of reform that exploded after the announcement of the war on poverty brought new medical programs, educational opportunities, and employment potential for the Appalachian region. A year-round Head Start program that was federal funded was created, offering assistance for low-income children entering public schools. This program also included medical care for more than 560,000 children, as well as dental and mental health services and educational training.¹⁶ It

¹⁴ For more on these programs and the restrictions see: John Glen, *The War on Poverty in Appalachia: Oral History from the 'Top Down' and the 'Bottom Up'.* *The Oral History Review* 22, no. 1 (Summer 1995): 69.

¹⁵ Thomas Kiffmeyer, *Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 49.

¹⁶ Project Head Start, http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Project_Head_Start, (accessed May 2, 2012).

was this type of reform and this new era of understanding that paved the way for the founding of CAW.¹⁷

After three years of “war,” one in three Appalachians still lived in poverty and many assistance groups and government agencies blamed the failure of reform efforts on the people of the region rather than the programs initiated, lack of technological skills training programs, or lack of employment opportunities in the region. The Council on Appalachian Women, however, did not overlook the real causes of continued poverty and focused its efforts on education, job training, and skills classes.

One of the most significant areas of change during this time was in the mining industry. Mining in the region provided the greatest opportunity for people living in Kentucky and West Virginia. Coal was the “life blood of Appalachia” and the region relied heavily on the jobs in coal mining, forestry, and agriculture. During the 1950s and 1960s, mechanization in the coal mines caused a reduction in employment and coal companies in West Virginia and Kentucky had the highest rates of unemployment in the nation.¹⁸ Areas in West Virginia, Southwest Virginia, and Kentucky that relied heavily on the mining industry for employment found themselves in a stage of transition during this time and once again had to adapt to the changing environment. As agricultural and mining jobs disappeared, manufacturing and service industry positions were created that required a very different educational background and job training that many in the region lacked.¹⁹

¹⁷ Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer*, 93.

¹⁸ Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia*, 93.

¹⁹ Ibid.

Oscar Lewis coined the phrase “culture of poverty” in his book *Five Families; Mexican Case Studies in the Culture of Poverty* in 1959.²⁰ Lewis states that, “poverty becomes a dynamic factor which effects participation in the large national culture and creates a subculture all its own.”²¹ In his 1969 work, Lewis enforced his argument by stating that, “Once it [Culture of Poverty] comes into existence, it tends to perpetuates from generation to generation and cripples children. By the time slum children are age six or seven, they have usually absorbed the basic values and attitudes of their subculture and are not psychologically geared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunities which may occur in their lifetime.”²² Scott Powell, in his master’s thesis on stereotypes of poor women, thesis argues that Lewis’ theory was used by many to “justify prejudices and negative stereotypes” and cites Edward Banfield (*The Unheavenly City: The Nature and Future of our Urban Crisis*, 1968) and others as using this theory to place blame on a “dysfunctional culture.”²³

Not all scholars writing about poverty since Lewis introduced the “culture of poverty” theory. This theory was used by many to advance prejudice and stereotyping of an entire population of people. For example, John Glen disputes this in his article, “The War on Poverty in Appalachia: Oral History from the ‘Top Down’ to the ‘Bottom Up’”, John Glen

²⁰ For more on Oscar Lewis and the culture of poverty see his *Five Families; Mexican Case Studies In The Culture Of Poverty* (New York: Random House, 1959); *The Children of Sanchez* (New York: Random House, 1961); *LA Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty--San Juan and New York* (New York: Random House, 1966), and *On Understanding Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1969).

²¹ Oscar Lewis, *Five Families: Mexican Case Studies In The Culture Of Poverty* (New York: Random House, 1959), 2.

²² Oscar Lewis, “The Culture of Poverty,” in *On Understanding Poverty: Perspectives from the Social Sciences*, ed. Daniel P. Moynihan (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 188.

²³ Scott Powell, “Overcoming Stereotypes about Poor Appalachian Single Mothers,” (master’s thesis, Ohio University, 2005), 12.

argues that, “for a growing number of antipoverty warriors in Appalachia, the problem was not a “culture of poverty” but a system that allowed powerless people to be exploited locally by “courthouse feudalism” and regionally by a colonial system dominated by absentee corporations.”²⁴

It is evident by the mention of this theory in many of the works written since it was coined in 1959 that this theory has poisoned popular thinking, heavily influenced scholarly work, and saturated the populace with preconceived notions regarding those living in poverty. This theory has also contributed significantly to the view of the Appalachian people as backwards and inferior to those outside the region in intelligence and work ethic. Lewis states that “the culture of poverty is both adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individuated, capitalistic society. It represents an effort to cope with feelings of hopelessness and despair that develop from the realization of the improbability of achieving success in terms of values and goals of the larger society.”²⁵ This theory has led many to believe that those living in poverty lack the ability to “lift themselves” out of poverty due to generational boundaries, trapping them in perpetual poverty.

Authors such as Ronald Lewis and Dwight Billings contradict the assumptions made by Oscar Lewis in their article *Appalachian Culture and Economic Development*. Lewis and Billings critiqued claims that the region was backwards and the presumption that “mountain culture” has “contributed to, or at least reinforced, economic backwardness and

²⁴ Glen, “The War on Poverty in Appalachia,” 73-74.

²⁵ Lewis, *The Culture of Poverty*, 188.

poverty.”²⁶ Lewis and Billings argue that the “isolationism attributed to the region's hypothetical culture of poverty applied, if at all, to only a small percentage of rural Appalachians” and urge policy makers to “recognize that Appalachia was becoming (and has been) a region of great social and cultural diversity.”²⁷ Reform efforts would have to develop a broader approach, rather than a single fix-all solution, to address poverty, education, job training, and other reforms in the region.

Mary K. Anglin, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Kentucky and author of “Lessons from Appalachia in the 20th Century: Poverty, Power, and the “Grassroots,” also writes about poverty in the region but offers very different reasons for perpetual poverty than those offered by Lewis. Although Anglin’s work does not specifically mention Oscar Lewis or his theory, her work can be used to demonstrate the argument against the generational poverty discussed by Lewis that dooms children to the same existence of their parents. Rather than placing blame on the inhabitants and the tendency to clump the people of the region into one large category of uneducated, unmotivated individuals, Anglin argues that grassroots organization worked to challenge the coal and mica companies that offered only minimum-wage part-time positions rather than a living-wage to its employees and discusses the resentment that many individuals interviewed from western North Carolina expressed towards being portrayed as “as a region filled with dirt farmers and families in tattered, rumpled clothes.”²⁸ Anglin argues that Appalachians were

²⁶ Ronald Lewis and Dwight Billings, “Appalachian Culture and Economic Development,” West Virginia University’s Regional Research Institute, rri.wvu.edu/pdffiles/lewisarc.pdf (accessed May 2, 2012). 5.

²⁷ Ronald Lewis and Dwight Billings, “Appalachian Culture and Economic Development,” 5.

²⁸ Mary K. Anglin, “Lessons from Appalachia in the 20th Century Lessons from Appalachia in the 20th Century: Poverty, Power, and the ‘Grassroots’,” *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 2 (2002):566.

“entrepreneurs, casual laborers, representatives in state and federal governments, and women and men in different classes, ethnicities, and national origins” who were not content to remain in poverty.²⁹

Anglin removed the blame from the inhabitants and placed it on the unethical hiring practices of area companies, the mechanization of factories that resulted in fewer jobs, and a wide range of economic circumstances that caused the deterioration of household and local economies and resulted in the rampant poverty of the region. Anglin’s work can be used to demonstrate the flaws in the theory in regards to the stereotypes of the inhabitants and the causes of generational poverty. By demonstrating how grassroots organizations worked to challenge those in economic power who kept Appalachians in poverty, she challenges the theory of poverty and the notion that Appalachians were content to remain in poverty and challenged the idea of the helplessness and resignation of those in poverty. Anglin takes the burden of poverty off of the people living in the region and places it on the “geographic differences”, business practices, limited employment opportunities, and changing working environment of the region.³⁰

Anglin presents a view of the Appalachian people that is as diverse as the landscape in which they live. The Council on Appalachian Women also recognized the diversity of the region, and although I found no record of the mention of Oscar Lewis or the Culture of Poverty theory in the collection, one could assume that because of the popularity of Lewis’s theory, CAW founders were very aware of the theory, its conclusions, and the effects that this type of thinking would have on the inhabitants of the region and reform efforts.

²⁹ Anglin, “Lessons from Appalachia in the 20th Century,” 566.

³⁰ Ibid., 576.

Oscar Lewis stated that, “one can speak of the culture of the poor, for it has its own modalities and distinctive social and psychological consequences for its members,” but to truly understand the “culture of the poor it is necessary to live with them, to learn their language and customs, and to identify with their problems and aspirations.”³¹ This point is a valid and much needed example for anyone wanting to study specific populations of poverty. The Appalachian region was considered a “subculture of its own” and if CAW or other groups combating poverty or looking to improve the lives of the Appalachian people had any hope of changing circumstances within the region, they would need to learn from those they wished to help.

CAW created goals to address the reform efforts in the region aware of the diversity, stereotypes, and assumptions of the region. Although it underestimated the challenges and constraints of serving such a geographically large region and the later realization that it would be impossible to administer an effective program in thirteen states from a central office in a somewhat isolated corner of North Carolina, CAW was aware that it must combat the preconceived notions and eliminate the stereotypes of the inhabitants before change can occur.³² This negative stereotyping regarding the Appalachian region led CAW to focus many of its efforts on education but not simply on educating those living in Appalachia. CAW worked to educate those within the region but also focused a great deal of time on educating those outside the region in the hopes of combating the perpetuation of the

³¹ For more on Oscar Lewis and the culture of poverty see, *Five Families; Mexican Case Studies In The Culture Of Poverty* (New York: Random House, 1959); *The Children of Sanchez* (New York: Random House, 1961); *LA Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty--San Juan and New York* (New York: Random House, 1966), *On Understanding Poverty* (New York: Basic Books, 1969).

³² Council on Appalachian Women, Box 15, Folder 9, “Position Papers, 1976-1979.” (Hereafter cited as CAW Collection.)

negative stereotypes and the tendency to apply general stereotypes to a diverse and varied population.

CAW focused its efforts on offering forums about the people, history, religion, traditions, and the landscape of Appalachia in order to showcase the values and views of the people of Appalachia.³³ Regardless of the argument regarding poverty in the Appalachian region, whether it is blamed on the people, the economy of the region, lack of educational opportunity, or limited employment, CAW's reform efforts, and other groups', were greatly affected by these stereotypes. The belief in and the perpetuation of these stereotypes hindered CAW's ability to gain funding and support. But thanks to the efforts of John Glen, John Campbell, Mary Anglin, Dwight Billings, Kathleen Blee, and a host of other scholars, as well as the Council on Appalachian Women, "outsiders" are gaining a better understanding of the region and its people. The stereotypes about the region are beginning to change, slowly. CAW, the Hindman School, Pine Mountain Settlement School, and the Frontier Nursing Service, all addressed the issues of poverty in the region, worked to offer assistance and opportunity for the Appalachian region, and worked to overcome existing stereotypes that caused negativity and indifference toward the region.

³³ CAW provided forums on: "Who Are We? The Appalachian People," "The Many Faces of Appalachia," For more information on the forums offered by CAW see CAW Collection, Box 12, Folder 26.

CHAPTER 3

REFORM IN APPALACHIA

Mountain women have never been known to walk away from a fight. Whether the issue was food, family, or fair play – they’ve been ready to give their best in a good scrap.

—Barbara Asbury, *Appalachian Women: Learning the Pain of Power*

The Hindman Settlement School

When placing the Council on Appalachian Women within a tradition of reform in Appalachia, one should first look at pioneering women’s reform institutions in the region, notably the women responsible for the Pine Mountain and Hindman settlements and the Frontier Nursing Service. CAW and the aforementioned reform movements focused on educational advancement, health care, skills training, and employment for women, whereas earlier reform movements called for basic civil rights such as the right to vote-- and social freedoms for women. Reform movements like the one initiated by CAW instead focused on identifying a woman’s place within the community and the importance of the work that women performed.

The following sections present a brief history of three reform movements of the region, the Hindman School, the Pine Mountain Settlement School, and the Frontier Nursing Service, and discuss the similarities between the three groups and CAW. This chapter includes a discussion of how each group, including CAW, emphasized education, focused on individual needs, and the similarities in their approach to mountain reform.

The first Appalachian reform-minded institution to function as a precursor to CAW was the Hindman Settlement school founded by May Stone and Katherine Pettit. Prior to the founding of their own institution, May Stone and Katherine Pettit visited the Elizabeth

Russell Settlement founded in 1897 at Tuskegee, Alabama, which had been established by Margaret James Murray, wife of Booker T. Washington. Many years after their visit to the Russell Settlement, Pettit and Stone founded the Hindman School in the summer of 1902 in Knott County in the heart of Appalachian Kentucky. Both founders of the school had excellent educational backgrounds and enjoyed an upper-middle class upbringing, which contrasted greatly to the people they served. Stone and Pettit's primary goal was on education and their mission was on educating the people of the Appalachian region. As many groups entering the region to educate soon found, they had as much to learn from the people of the region as they did to teach.

May Stone attended Wellesley College from 1883 to 1887 and was a first-generation member of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR). Katherine Pettit had been involved with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) before going into settlement work; her WCTU contacts helped with fundraising and sponsored the new Hindman Settlement School.¹ The Hindman School was the first settlement school in America to serve a rural population. It received funds from many sources; one of the largest was from Henry Evans who, in 1925, left one-sixteenth of a multimillion-dollar estate to Hindman Settlement School.² The school also received donations from the Daughters of the American Revolution, Berea College Appalachian Fund, the E.O. Robinson Fund, and the Steele-Reese Foundation, a New York based foundation that offered funding to projects

¹ Hindman Settlement School Website, "Celebrating Heritage, Changing Lives," <http://www.hindmansettlement.org/> (accessed March 15, 2012).

² Jess Stoddart, *Challenge and Change in Appalachia: The Story of Hindman Settlement School* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 1-2.

that “help people help themselves.”³ Bill Buice, one of the board members of the Steele-Reese Foundation, stated that “an important criterion for the foundation’s grant giving is that a project must have significant local support and must help the community in which the organization is located.”⁴ The Hindman Settlement School served as a quintessential example of this definition. The school later received funds from the Appalachian Regional Commission, which provided \$350,000 for the dyslexia program and additional funds for the adult literacy program and craft shop.⁵ CAW also followed the rule of helping those who help themselves and geared programs to the specific needs of each region,

In the opening chapter of her book *Challenge and Change in Appalachia: The Story of Hindman Settlement School*, Jess Stoddart states that, “the school founders worked within the cultural constraints that dictated appropriate roles for women while enlarging the sphere of ‘women’s work’ in their own lives as leaders of mountain reform.”⁶ Because Petit and Stone understood these constraints, they took a pragmatic approach to the kinds of programs and services they initiated in the community. This approach was essentially the one later taken by Jeanne Hoffman and the founders of the Council on Appalachian Women. Just as Stone and Pettit had done, CAW founders worked to understand the culture and traditions of the region and the views of a “woman’s place” as traditionally being in the home and worked to change that view to include women in the workforce. Stoddart sums it up best by stating, “They taught; they learned; they found themselves part of an exciting

³ Jess Stoddart, *Challenge and Change in Appalachia: The Story of Hindman Settlement School*. 201.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., 4.

and satisfying cultural exchange with mountain people. Over time, they became important and influential leaders in the world of mountain reform, and Hindman Settlement School became equally influential in shaping many elements of that reform work.”⁷ This, too, can be said of the women working with CAW and about their efforts to learn, as well as to teach, in their exchange of knowledge between the mountain women and CAW organizers.

The Hindman School and later CAW both involved a group effort and worked in conjunction with other organizations within the region to offer assistance and services to the inhabitants of the region. Pettit and Stone worked with many other organizations, such as the WCTU and the Kentucky Federation of Women’s Clubs, and this collaborative effort contributed to the success of the school. Stone’s connection with the “club women” of the NSDAR, whose main goal “was the improvement of education,” helped forge communication networks with family, friends, and other women’s organizations and reform groups. What resulted, then, as Stoddard noted, was “a strong base of support for the summer camps and the Hindman Settlement School,” which served as a key component in the ability of the school to offer much needed educational programs in the region.⁸ A later school, the Pine Mountain Settlement School, was established in 1913 in Harlan county in the remote region of eastern Kentucky. The Pine Mountain School followed in the footsteps of Pettit and Stone in its organization and operation and worked to educate as well as learn from the people of Appalachia.

One difference in the founding of the Hindman School and the Council on Appalachian Women was that the Hindman School was founded and managed by two

⁷ Stoddard, *Challenge and Change in Appalachia*, 4.

⁸ Ibid., 20.

individuals. The council on the other hand was founded by a group of thirty-five women and organized with a President, Vice President, Secretary, Directors, and several Board members, all of which wanted a say in the management of the organization. Another difference was that the school focused on one goal, education, while CAW operated on a larger scale and worked to include a wide-range of services. The inclusion of so many individuals with differing ideas was one of the reasons that CAW was unable to meet all the goals set by the organization. CAW dissolved five years after it was founded while the Hindman School is still in operation today. While Pettit and Stone were able to develop and implement a plan of action with set goals with specific outcomes, CAW was unable to narrow its focus, become a unified group, or achieve many of its goals due to conflict among its members and the vastness of the task at hand.

Pine Mountain Settlement School and the Conference of Southern Mountain Workers

The Pine Mountain Settlement School, founded in 1913 in Harlan County, is one of the best examples of the settlement schools of Eastern Kentucky. Katherine Pettit, co-founder of the Hindman Settlement School, and Ethel DeLong worked with Pine Mountain resident William Creech, a landowner who moved his family from Cumberland, Kentucky, and donated the land for the school, to establish the Pine Mountain School. Creech believed that, “the only chance for local improvement was through educating the children”⁹ As stated by Jordan Dolfi in her paper on Marguerite Butler at the Pine Mountain Settlement School and The John C. Campbell Folk School, “rather than teaching the children to reject the traditions around them, these schools sought to build upon the mountain culture by infusing modern education exercises and practicing and teaching the traditional

⁹ Dolfi, “Marguerite Butler at the Pine Mountain Settlement & The John C. Campbell Folk School,” 3.

handicrafts and occupations that would truly benefit the children's real lives."¹⁰ Dolfi stated that teaching children to accept tradition and incorporate them into modern life "would adequately prepare them for the occupational opportunities that would be open to them in their home towns and counties."¹¹ CAW organizers, like the founders of Pine Mountain, also accepted the traditions, values, and religious beliefs of the people of the region and worked to incorporate them into the reform efforts. It was this incorporation of the needs and values of the people of the region that allowed both groups to achieve the goals set forth of offer needed assistance.

The Pine Mountain School offered educational services for children at the elementary level through high school, built extensive campuses, grew much of its own food, and as stated by Dolfi, "aimed to link education and community work through teaching and learning."¹² Pettit worked with the Women's Christian Temperance Union to establish a "traveling library" for the region, began summer educational initiatives, emphasized the positives of Appalachian culture, and raised money for a permanent school in Hazard. Dolfi also emphasized that Pettit "aimed to teach the students that their culture was just as valid as any other regional American culture" and thus enforced the need to include the people of the region and their traditions in the reform efforts.¹³

CAW appears to have followed the groundwork and ideas set forth by Pettit, Stone, and earlier groups and saw the people they were there to help as part of the movement. The group appears to have also followed the example set by another organization

¹⁰ Dolfi, "Marguerite Butler at the Pine Mountain Settlement & The John C. Campbell Folk School," 2.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

significant to mountain reform, the Conference of Southern Mountain Workers (CSM), later known simply as the Council of the Southern Mountains.¹⁴ CSM was founded in 1913 as a result of research conducted by John and Olive Campbell to identify the necessity to bring healthcare, education, and church workers together to address the needs of the region and John served as the conference's executive until his death in 1919.¹⁵ After his death, Olive Campbell became executive, established an office in Berea, Kentucky, and served CSM until 1928 and the Conference offered such services as health programs, settlement schools, and an Appalachian migrant program in Chicago.¹⁶ In 1913 Pettit worked with John Campbell to encourage cooperation among workers in mountain schools.¹⁷ This early connection to Pettit and the John and Olive Campbell led to the schools later involvement in the 1964 meeting at Pine Mountain. At a meeting held at the Pine Mountain School, CSM worked to bring together nineteen colleges (representatives from sixteen attended) to endorse the establishment of a permanent regional organization that operated strictly on a volunteer basis using student volunteers (known as the Appalachian Volunteers) from area colleges to assist with school renovations, bookmobiles, and tutoring services for children and

¹⁴ The Council on Southern Mountains (CSM) was formed in 1913 as the Conference of Southern Mountain Workers. In 1944, it became the Council of Southern Mountain Workers and in 1954, the Council of the Southern Mountains. During the 1960s and 1970s the group began to focus more on coal mining issues and related concerns in labor, health, safety, and land ownership. For more information on CSM visit its website at: <http://www.berea.edu/hutchinslibrary/specialcollections/saa101history.asp#history>

¹⁵ Harry Rice, "Records of the Council of the Southern Mountains, 1970-1989," Berea College, <http://www.berea.edu/hutchinslibrary/specialcollections/exhibit/exhibitsaa101overview.asp> (accessed June 22, 2012).

¹⁶ Abramson, Rudy and Jean Haskell, *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 159.

¹⁷ Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia*, 4.

adults.¹⁸ A valuable tool used during this time by reform groups was the recently passed Economic Opportunity Act. This act, as stated by Thomas Kiffmeyer, mandated that those receiving assistance would be required to participate in the reform and this new reform set forth the idea that “the impoverished should help design the organizations and social agencies” that moved into the region and implemented programs.¹⁹ Thanks to a grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), volunteers worked to renovate schools, enrich the school curriculum, and provide Appalachians with the skills and education necessary to gain higher paying jobs and further their education.²⁰

This grant also allowed CSM and the reform projects initiated under their leadership (Campus Action for Mountain Progress (CAMP) at Berea College and the Appalachian Volunteers) to develop enrichment programs, provide health education programs, establish bookmobiles, and offer recreational activities to the people of the region. Programs also included tutoring services for adults and children and other community development program, such as helping homeowners repair their houses.²¹ CSM established the service group Appalachian Volunteers (AV), a community Action Program that offered tutoring, assisted in renovation projects, and provided bookmobiles. Differences over style and strategy led to a split by the Appalachian Volunteers from the Council of the Southern Mountains in 1966. Milton Ogle, a key figure in the Appalachian Volunteers movement, developed the attitude, while working at Berea College, that the

¹⁸ For more on the Appalachian Volunteers see: Thomas Kiffmeyer, *Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2008).

¹⁹ Kiffmeyer, *Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty*, 50.

²⁰ Whisnant, *Modernizing the Mountaineer: People, Power, and Planning in Appalachia*, 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 51.

school was good “at . . . taking in people that had been by-passed by the non-system of education that existed then in Appalachia and helping them to get over the hurdles . . . that they couldn’t get over in their own communities.”²² Ogle carried this attitude with him when he began working with CSM in 1959 and the AV in 1963. He contended that the overall CSM/AV goal was to show “how people could be involved in things that affected their lives.”²³ It would also appear that CAW took a lesson from CSM and AV and carried their theme of helping individuals overcome the hurdles within their own communities into its reform efforts.

The previous work of CSM and the AV in the early part of the twentieth century paved the way for CAW’s arrival in 1976 by opening up doors in the region by establishing trust and acceptance of ‘outsiders’ looking to offer assistance and establish themselves in the region. The work in the communities by these volunteers opened doors for CAW by demonstrating to the residents of the region that outside agencies would work alongside them, rather than for or against them, and allowed CAW founder an easier transition when advocating for change within the region. CSM and AV’s inclusion of the people of the region in the reform efforts also proved a beneficial learning tool for CAW and this method of “helping those who help themselves” became a prevalent theme in CAW and other mountain reform movements.

The Frontier Nursing Service

Another major organization in the mountain reform movement was the Frontier Nursing Service (FNS), founded by Mary Breckinridge, in Leslie County, Kentucky, in 1925.

²² Abramson and Haskell, *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*, 160.

²³ Kiffmeyer, *Reformers to Radicals*, 45-46.

Breckinridge remained the director of the service until her death in 1965.²⁴ She was born February 17, 1881, in Memphis, Tennessee, to a southern aristocratic family. In 1904 at the age of 23, Breckinridge married attorney Henry Ruffner Morrison of Hot Springs, Arkansas; who died shortly after. She married a second time eight years later in 1912 to Richard Ryan Thompson and soon became the mother of two children. Prior to becoming a mother, she taught French and Hygiene at Crescent College and Conservatory for Young Women in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, where her husband was also the president of the college. She gave birth to her first child Thomas in 1914 and two years later she gave birth to a second child, Polly. Sadly, Polly was born prematurely and died after only six hours. Her son Thomas died at the age of four, in January 1918, of appendicitis, leaving her childless and devastated.²⁵

In her book *Mary Breckinridge: The Frontier Nursing Service and Rural Health in Appalachia*, Melanie Goan states that in 1920, Breckinridge “initiated divorce proceedings against her husband and took back her maiden name” something that was virtually unheard of in that day.²⁶ After the death of her two children, the death of her first husband, and the divorce from her second husband, she returned to her first love, nursing. Breckinridge trained as a nurse at St. Luke’s Hospital in New York, trained as a nurse-midwife in Great Britain, and then moved to Leslie County, Kentucky to ply her trade. Goan stated that it was at this time that, on horseback, Breckinridge began to gather data about

²⁴ Kimberly Harrison Raines and Astrid Wilson, “Frontier Nursing Service: A Historical Perspective on Nurse-Managed Care,” *Journal of Community Health Nursing*. 13, no. 2 (1996): 123.

²⁵ Raines and Wilson, “Frontier Nursing Service,” 123.

²⁶ Melanie Beals Goan. *Mary Breckinridge: The Frontier Nursing Service and Rural Health in Appalachia* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 54.

the people of the area in order to create “a model for healthcare systems that would serve the most remote regions of the world.”²⁷

The nursing service offered healthcare to a largely unsettled region with few paved roads and no licensed physician.²⁸ The nursing service was the only medical care facility for many in the region. The Frontier Nursing Service, originally known as the Kentucky Committee for Mothers and Babies, was the first organization in America to use trained nurses as midwives, and Rains and Wilson state that although Breckinridge had “first failed to recognize the challenges that the area’s rugged environment and lagging economy posed for its residents” she soon “became familiar with Leslie County and its residents and moved beyond her stereotyped assumptions (of the inhabitants as lazy) and became an advocate for economic development”²⁹ This example of dismissing preconceived notions and existing stereotypes seems to become a running theme for outsiders and organizers, such as Pettit, Stone, and Breckinridge, or later Jeanne Hoffman and the founders of CAW. All these women moved into the region with preconceived notions based on existing stereotypes but soon learned that the region is not as backwards as believed, the people are hardworking individuals, and that the region lacked opportunity and support.³⁰

Goan stated that in 1925, Breckinridge assembled a committee composed of “eight doctors, the Presidents of Berea College and the University of Kentucky, a newspaper editor, and an officer of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad, several well-respected

²⁷ Goan. *Mary Breckinridge*, 126.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

²⁹ Rains and Wilson, “Frontier Nursing Service,” 125.

³⁰ Goan, *Mary Breckinridge*, 8.

mountain workers, and a gubernatorial candidate” to provide guidance and “respectability to her efforts.”³¹ Once this support network was in place, Breckenridge started a crusade for funding and looked to other groups and community agencies for assistance.³²

Like CAW, which operated on a volunteer basis for almost a year, FNS relied on volunteers and also the funds provided by Breckinridge, who had personally funded the service until monies became available from granting agencies and private donations. During the first few months after the organization was founded, Breckinridge spent much of her time outside the region soliciting funds and organizing, and received most of her money to run her nursing service from groups outside the region.³³ She struggled to gain support locally and set her sights on large cities such as New York, Chicago, and Boston “not only because they were home to the wealthiest Americans but because they had established ‘visiting nurses’ services” in the hopes of growing FNS³⁴ Organizations outside the region and the funds they provided kept the service in operation and allowed the operation of the hospital at the center of the town, as well as the operation of six outpost-nursing centers that served over nine districts throughout the county.³⁵

The nurses of FNS served an average of 250 families per outpost and held immunization clinics at area schools. It provided advice regarding sanitization and

³¹ Raines and Wilson, “Frontier Nursing Service,” 82.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 93.

³⁴ Goan, *Mary Breckinridge*, 101.

³⁵ Raines and Wilson, “Frontier Nursing Service,” 126.

healthcare, made arrangements for high-risk patients to be seen at Hyden Hospital, and offered referral services for patients to receive specialized care beyond the mountains.³⁶ During the first four months of its existence, the three women saw over 500 patients. In 1930, the infant mortality rate in Leslie County dropped to 46.4 deaths per 1,000 births, compared to 65 deaths per 1,000 in 1920.³⁷ By 1932, the Frontier Nursing Service had grown to encompass an area of 800 square miles divided into eight districts.³⁸

As CAW would discover later, one of the main obstacles for FNS and any organization providing services or support in the rural mountainous regions of Appalachia was the isolated conditions of the population. This isolation made communication with other agencies and groups difficult. In order to combat this problem, a courier service was established that consisted of volunteers, who would deliver supplies daily to the outpost clinics.³⁹ Like FNS, CAW recognized the problem of communication within a challenging geographical region by forming a vast communication network, contact list for the many services and programs offered, and a support network with other organizations throughout the region.

Mary Breckinridge died in 1965, leaving FNS with a \$2 million dollar endowment and over \$10 million dollars that she had raised for the organization.⁴⁰ In 1970, the name of the school was changed to the Frontier School of Midwifery and Family Nursing (FSMFN) to

³⁶ Frontier Nursing Service, "How FNS Began," <http://www.frontiernursing.org/History/History.shtm> (accessed March 15, 2012).

³⁷ Raines and Wilson, "Frontier Nursing Service," 125.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 126

³⁹ Frontier Nursing Service, "How FNS Began." (accessed March 15, 2012).

⁴⁰ Goan, *Mary Breckinridge*, 248.

reflect the addition of the FNP program and in 1975 the Frontier Nursing Service completed and opened the modern, forty-bed Mary Breckinridge Hospital and Health Center. This hospital has served the health care needs of the people of Leslie County for the past thirty years and continues its operation today as part of the Appalachian Regional Healthcare system.⁴¹ In 2003, FNS began to offer a master's degree and in 2011 the name changed to Frontier Nursing University to reflect the graduate level master's and doctoral programs offered.⁴²

The following similarities can be observed when comparing the later work of the Council on Appalachian Women to that of the Frontier Nursing Service. Like FNS, the Council on Appalachian Women sought to involve the community in the reform efforts which helped both achieve gain acceptance in the region. Both organizations operated on a volunteer basis or on a limited budget. Like FNS, the Council on Appalachian Women was faced with providing care and services to rural mountainous regions with limited resources, communication networks, and staff. Although FNS was founded in 1925 and operated during the late 1920s and 1930s, the group faced rugged conditions due to the lack of roads throughout the mountainous terrain in which it operated. CAW faced many of the same problems as FNS, although operating almost fifty years after FNS. Both groups faced geographical obstacles, limited funding (at least initially for FNS), and a lack of communication networks, but both groups held the key to achieving its goals; accepting the limitations and the assets of the region. Both groups were able to effect change in the region and offer a high level of assistance by including the inhabitants of the region in the

⁴¹ Frontier Nursing Service, "How FNS Began." (accessed March 15, 2012).

⁴² Ibid.

reform effort, listening to the needs of each community, and offering assistance based on the needs of each individual.

Again, CAW chose to focus on a wide range of goals which made it difficult to tackle all the issues it wanted to address while FNS, like the Hindman School, focused on one problem. FNS focused on establishing clinics and concentrating on better healthcare for the inhabitants of the region. CAW also worked to offer healthcare but its reform efforts encompassed healthcare, job training, educational forums, and many other programs making it much too difficult for the group to meet all the needs of such a diverse group.

The programs offered by CSM, the Hindman School, and FNS were part of a social reform movement in the region that paved the way for later organizations such as the Council of Appalachian Women. Like the Pine Mountain Settlement and Hindman Schools, CAW provided educational programs, but went beyond the traditional scope of education by providing information regarding birth control, domestic abuse, and sexual harassment. CAW also did something that few other reform movements had done before - it focused its reform efforts exclusively on educating women within the Southern Appalachian region.

CAW also introduced the topics of birth control, domestic abuse, and rape, and all are still controversial topics. Discussions over whether or not to teach sex education in schools, for example, can still be heard frequently on news programs throughout the country. The first birth control clinic in the United States was opened by Margaret Sanger in Brooklyn in New York City in 1916. Sanger, who was arrested in 1917, and arrested

several additional times over the next few years for her open views supporting a woman's right to birth control, addressed the issue in the urban streets of New York.⁴³

Discussing birth control in the small, rural communities of Appalachia would have been a completely different dialogue. In these small close-knit communities where many held dearly to the belief that female children should be taught from a young age that their purpose was to marry and become mothers, openly discussing birth control went against years of tradition.

Theresa Lloyd, author of "Women in Traditional Churches," discusses Old-Time Baptist and Pentecostal churches and notes how in these two denominations that "women's roles traditionally are circumscribed, a practice that mirrors the region's generally conservative stance on gender issues." She goes on to point out, however, that the Pentecostal tradition did allow women a much wider array of roles even accepting some as ministers.⁴⁴ Although some were allowed to become ministers in the Pentecostal religion their roles were limited and did not always offer equal institutional power with men. For example, women were allowed to preach to the congregation but forbade from performing marriages and serving on the Body of Elders.⁴⁵ Lloyd discusses that holiness leader's such as John Larkin Brasher held to traditional ideas about "feminine

⁴³ Margaret Sanger was educated as and worked as a nurse. In 1912, Sanger gave up nursing work to dedicate herself to the distribution of birth control information. In 1916, Sanger set up the first birth control clinic in the United States. She was arrested the following year for creating a public nuisance. Her many arrests and prosecutions, and the resulting outcries, helped lead to changes in laws regarding birth control. For more on Sanger see Alexander Sanger's book, *Beyond Choice: Reproductive Freedom in the 21st Century* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Perseus Books Groups, 2004), 34.

⁴⁴ Theresa Lloyd, "Women in Traditional Churches," in *the Encyclopedia of Appalachia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 1359.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

submissiveness and piety” his belief in the fact that the “indwelling spirit” was non-gendered led Brasher to allow women to serve as missionaries, testifiers, and preachers. However, these denominations general attitude toward women held firm to Brasher’s original idea that women should, “find fulfillment in the home as wives and mothers.”⁴⁶

Although Church leaders expected that women would find fulfillment as mothers and homemakers, Lloyd is careful to emphasize that, “in their secular lives Appalachian women hold a variety of positions from homemakers to elected officials and educated professionals.”⁴⁷ Lloyd attributes the willingness of women to attend churches that “relegate them to lesser roles to the close sororal bonding that occurs among the female members” and it is the bonding that occurs among women within a region that creates community.⁴⁸

Loyal Jones, a prominent author on the subject of religion in the Appalachian Mountains, states in *Values and Religion in Central Appalachian* that, “religion both reflects and shapes the values by which people live, and the case in Appalachia is no different.”⁴⁹ He goes on to list these traits as independence, humility, familism, personalism, egalitarianism, and hospitality.⁵⁰ Jones emphasizes the tradition of placing the male in the dominate role and states that, “family is important in central Appalachian life, and, in general, the Pauline model accepted, with the father at the head and the wife and children

⁴⁶ Lloyd, “Women in Traditional Churches,” 1359.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Loyal Jones, “Values and Religion in Central Appalachia,” in *the Encyclopedia of Appalachia* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2006), 1357.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

obedient to him.”⁵¹ However, like Lloyd, Jones is careful to point out that studies have shown that, “while the father is conservative and resistant to change, women are usually better educated and often take more progressive leadership in regard to such matters as education, health care, and innovations that improve the quality of living.”⁵²

Both authors discuss the tendency for many local churches to place women in a subservient role, but both are careful to offer complicating evidence, such as Lloyd’s discussion of the bonding of women in Pentecostal churches or the discussion by Jones regarding women taking a progressive leadership role in several churches throughout the region. The three issues mentioned by Jones - health care, education, and quality of life changes - are exactly the areas in which CAW worked to implement change. The group’s decision to target women as its primary audience also proved to be an important and beneficial choice.⁵³

While CAW was able to broach the topics of education, job training, and health care, the conservative, traditional patriarchal Christian views have made it difficult for any group to advocate openly for birth control. It was also difficult for any group to broach the topics of rape, teen pregnancy, sexual abuse, education, and work outside the home. According to Loyal Jones, this is especially true in a region where family roles are often defined by a religion that follows the Pauline model in which the “father is placed at the head and wife and children obedient to him.”⁵⁴ Even though historically many women in Appalachia

⁵¹ Jones, “Values and Religion in Central Appalachia,” 1357.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

worked outside the home in factories or on family farms, still the expectations were for young girls to marry, become mothers, and serve their husbands. This belief also was well defined within many socioeconomic classes and regions of the nation.

This belief that women should find happiness as homemakers is illustrated in two sources on Appalachian women, the book *Creeker* by Linda Scott DeRosier and the film *Seven Sisters: A Kentucky Portrait*, directed by Patrick Donohew. Both discuss the expectation held by most in their rural communities that girls marry and have children. *Seven Sisters* shows how each sister takes a separate path throughout their lives. The film showcases rebellion, sacrifice, and the determination of the eight sisters to become strong independent women. DeRosier also offers examples of rebellious women. The book also provides us with the image of a doting father, who taught his little girls that anything was possible through hard work and determination and that her gender should not keep them from her dreams. DeRosier also provides us with the image a grandmother who was the backbone of her family. Her book showcases strong, determined women. *Creeker* tells the story of a young girl growing up in what is now Boons Camp, Kentucky, in 1940 -1960. DeRosier expresses how she benefited from a father who never made her and her sister feel that he would have been happier with sons and a mother who was a teacher before she married and a “stand out” in the community, with her short red shorts and red lipstick. She states that her mother was “brilliant and spirited and passionate in a time and a place where a woman was allowed to be none of those things.”⁵⁵ Linda said she admired her mother but noted that she was: “a freight train that never could get to the station. She had a

⁵⁵ Linda Scott DeRosier, *Creeker: A Woman's Journey* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 14.

formidable intelligence and absolutely nowhere to focus it that would have been considered appropriate in that time and place.”⁵⁶

The video *Seven Sisters* is an oral memoir that tells the story of a family of seven sisters who grew up in, and then moved away from, their Appalachian homes. The sisters share their stories, memories, laughter, and shame, while demonstrating the close knit family ties formed among rural Appalachian families.⁵⁷ The community expectations were that girls would complete their school, marry, and have children, not seek paid work outside the home. They were not expected to move away, unless their husbands received a job that took them from home. And they were certainly not expected to attend college and become independent, self-sufficient, educated women. The video depicts the different paths taken by each sister. The seven sisters faced obstacles, including learning disabilities, sibling rivalries, taking on parental roles after their mother was hospitalized, and giving up a dream to attend college for the responsibilities of taking care of family. Each sister demonstrates strength and a determination that is often overlooked in the “weaker sex.”⁵⁸ Both *Creeker* and *Seven Sisters* make references to how many of the women in the region were submissive and accepting of their “lot in life”. Regardless of their determination, intelligence, or talents, they are trapped by their gender and expected to make great sacrifices in the name of womanhood.

Betty Friedan, in her book *Feminine Mystic*, also discusses the traditional role expectations of women. Friedan discusses how young girls are taught specific life-lessons,

⁵⁶ DeRosier, *Creeker: A Woman's Journey*, 17.

⁵⁷ Patrick Donohew, *Seven Sisters: a Kentucky Portrait*, DVD, (San Francisco: Sour Mash Films, 2000).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

such as how to attract a mate, at a young age and although her words do not refer directly to Appalachian women but primarily to white, middle-class women, her discussion of the life-lessons women are taught, nonetheless, apply to all women. She states that young girls are told, "Over and over that they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity."⁵⁹

Friedan states that

A young girl is taught how to catch a man and keep him, how to breastfeed children and handle their toilet training, how to cope with sibling rivalry and adolescent rebellion; how to bake bread, how to dress, how to look, and how to act more feminine and make marriage more exciting. They were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets or physicists or presidents. They learned that truly feminine women do not want careers, higher education, political rights- All they had to do was devote their lives from earliest girlhood to finding a husband and bearing children.⁶⁰

Although all three sources above refer to the submissiveness of women, they also champion the strengths. DeRosier's willingness to share her life, her fears, her failures, and her journey with us and her portrayal of her mother's intelligence and strength is a perfect example of female strength and determination. Hazel's outspokenness and her honesty, Dorothy's selflessness and strength, and Glenna's ability to stand alone all offer us images of the Appalachian woman that contradict the notion that they are weak and submissive. It is these same traits; strength, intelligence, and determination, that are showcased in Katherine Petit, May Stone, Mary Breckenridge, Jeanne Hoffman, the founders and members of CAW.

⁵⁹ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton Company, Inc. 1963), 16.

⁶⁰ Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, 16.

Many people in Appalachia, but certainly not all, held a long-standing view of a woman's place as wife and mother. Considering the patriarchal tradition of the region and the expectation that women marry and become mothers, it is easy to understand why CAW broached the topic of birth control but then decided that this issue was more suitable for a health agency to address.⁶¹ Openly discussing sexual abuse, rape, and teen pregnancy perhaps could have made the group a target for religious organizations in the region. Perhaps even broaching such controversial issues contributed to CAW's inability to receive funding from certain groups and agencies wishing to remain neutral on such a controversial issue. But it was the disagreements among the council's board members regarding the placement of power and the long-range goals of the group that led to the demise of the organization.

The main reasons for the dissolution of the council were that the organizers attempted to offer too many programs and services, failed to work together cohesively, and failed to develop a clear plan of action that would narrow its focus to specific services. The differences in management style, the sheer number of women working within the council, and the number of services and programs the organization attempted to encompass throughout such a vast region proved too difficult to overcome. Unlike FNS and the Hindman School, both of which narrowed their foci to a specific region and a particular problem, CAW chose to cover a vast array of programs and services. CAW, unlike FNS and the Hindman Settlement School, also created a large administrative component within its organization. These two main differences can be used to explain CAW's inability to

⁶¹ CAW, Box 12, Folder 23, "Evaluation of Council," 1981.

maintain a long-lasting organization within the region, while FNS and the Hindman School were able to maintain organizations that still exist today.

Reform Movements and the Council on Appalachian Women

It was difficult for “outsiders” to move into the rural regions of Appalachia and form working relationships with the people of the region because the people were cautious and slow to change what years of tradition had taught them. Whether implementing reform in 1902 when the Hindman School was founded, in 1913 when the Pine Mountain Settlement School was established, in 1925 when Mary Breckenridge founded the Frontier Nursing Service, or in 1976 when CAW began its work, reform efforts proved to be difficult, but not impossible.

In the introduction to the collection of essays he edited, *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change*, Stephen Fisher stated that the “industrialization of the region” set the tone for “single-industry economies; the control of land by large absentee companies; high levels of poverty and unemployment; political corruption, and a highly stratified and oppressive class system.”⁶² The “cultural traditions” of the region stressed “individualism and nurtured racial prejudice” and led to the inhabitants of the region’s inability to form “strong local organizations due to the level of illiteracy, absence of grassroots identity, and the poor transportation and communication systems.”⁶³ Fisher goes on to state that even when faced with such “repressive conditions,” the people of the region found ways to fight back and that “changing conditions after 1960 paved a way for

⁶² Stephen Fisher, Introduction to *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 3.

⁶³ Ibid.

organized resistance in a wide variety of forms.”⁶⁴ As stated by Fisher, the Civil Rights movement helped “legitimize dissent”; the environmental and women’s movements of this time offered “models and resources for local groups in the mountains”; the “anti-war and student movements called into question the notions of progress, modernization, and national interest, that had been used for so long to destroy traditional ways of life in Appalachia.”⁶⁵ CAW embraced many of the themes listed above in its reform efforts.

The ability of any group to offer services and establish itself in the region depended on the group’s ability to learn as well as teach. This ability to adapt and learn is evident in the organizations listed above, as well as CAW. All the organizations listed above, FNS, CSM, Appalachian Volunteers, and CAW, implemented the technique of offering individualized assistance to specific regions based on particular needs. It was the acceptance of the values and beliefs that the people of the region held that allowed them to gain acceptance and offer assistance to individuals in the region. All had to learn to work within the constraints of this belief system and slowly modify tradition to meet of a changing world. Jess Stoddart stated (of the reform movements of the early 1900s) that these groups “worked within the cultural constraints that dictated appropriate roles for women while enlarging the sphere of “women’s work” and CAW organizers most certainly fit this description.⁶⁶

Reform was difficult for any group in the region due to the diverse needs of specific regions and individual residents. However, while the residents of the region were sometimes reluctant to accept help from “outsiders”, the primary opponents to reform

⁶⁴ Fisher, Introduction to *Fighting Back in Appalachia: Traditions of Resistance and Change*. 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Stoddart, *Challenge and Change in Appalachia*, 1-2.

efforts in the region was not the residents, but those in power. For example, the Council of the Southern Mountains (CSM) met opposition, not from the residents, but from those in political office. Glen stated in his article "The War on Poverty in Appalachia: Oral History from the "Top Down" and the "Bottom Up," that, "county politics often stifled any meaningful change."⁶⁷ Glen also stated that business owners, politicians, and those in power worked to impede the progress of reform movements whether the reasons were, "an unwillingness to work with the poor, fights over potential political patronage, bureaucratic in-fighting, confusion, compromise, incompetence, or indifference, the result seemed little more than the perpetuation of the status quo."⁶⁸

Another example of the opposition many reform groups encountered in the region can be found in Thomas Kiffmeyer's article, "From Self-Help to Sedation: The Appalachian Volunteers in Eastern Kentucky, 1964-1970." Kiffmeyer describes how most reform groups "failed to recognize that a new political culture had arisen in the coalfields alongside entrenched poverty" and how coal companies now "dominated the Appalachian economy, monopolized its political resources, and could mobilize against threats to their hegemony."⁶⁹ Those with power and money wanted to maintain the current system and would rise up against anyone who threatened to take either away from them.

A war not only waged against poverty but also waged between activist groups (CSM and the Appalachian Volunteers), and coal company operators and the county officials who were allied with them. Coal companies "employed their political resources (organizational

⁶⁷ Glen, "The War on Poverty in Appalachia,"74.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Thomas Kiffmeyer, "From Self-Help to Sedation": The Appalachian Volunteers in Eastern Kentucky, 1964-1970," *Journal of Southern History* 64, no. 1 (February 1998): 69.

unity and ready access to governmental organs, financial resources, and the courts) to maintain their position at the top of this inequitable system.”⁷⁰ In the spring of 1966, one CSM staff member wrote, “Community Action in Appalachia was a battlefield littered with the remains of grandiose schemes thought up by federal planners who did not understand that coordination was no easier in the mountains than in Washington.”⁷¹ The need for coordination and communication was a top priority for many reform groups that arrived with high hopes and grand schemes but the true obstacle was combating the political system and the interest of businesses in positions of power. Many groups arrived with grand ideas only to find that the goal they wished to achieve was as high as the mountains that surrounded them.

While initiating reform efforts in the region was a difficult task, money was readily available, at least in the initial phase of the War on Poverty. The founders of the Council on Appalachian Women were able to capitalize on the abundance of funding and this new era of reform effort. The group received funding from the Appalachian Regional Commission to establish itself in the region. As previous discussion indicates, CAW was part of a renewed social activism and mountain reform movement that began in the 1960s and flourished throughout Appalachia. CAW opened the channels of communication among activists, scholars, educators, funding agencies, and politicians.

Women such as May Stone and Katherine Pettit fought for literacy, Mary Breckinridge for healthcare, and Jeanne Hoffman for educational and job training programs. Fisher states that, “community groups fought to create alternate economic

⁷⁰ Kiffmeyer, “From Self-Help to Sedation.” 69.

⁷¹ Ibid., 75.

development strategies that resulted in agricultural and craft cooperatives, worker-owned factories, and new job opportunities for women.”⁷² He also stated that most organizations “arose in response to a single issue, but there were also attempts to build region-wide coalitions, and many of the single-issue groups provided impetus for the development of multi-issued, grassroots organizations committed to the long haul.”⁷³ The Council on Appalachian Women was most certainly a multi-issue organization that sought to tackle a wide range of problems and issues throughout a vast and diverse territory.

CAW focused on the rights of women to adequate educational and employment opportunities, for adequate healthcare, and protection from abuse and harassment. It focused on providing job skills training courses and on teaching women life skills. CAW worked to offer programs that would help women break into male-dominated fields. CAW worked to educate women about their rights regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, abuse, and domestic violence. It also stressed the need for women in rural Appalachia to obtain a strong education in order to receive higher-paying jobs. It emphasized that in order to achieve these goals women must have an arena in which to voice their concerns.⁷⁴ The women of CAW provided this arena. CAW founders followed in the footsteps of many who came before them and worked to open doors and create opportunities for women to achieve their full potential.

⁷² Fisher, Introduction to *Fighting Back in Appalachia*, 5.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ CAW Collection, Box 15, Folder 9, “Position Paper, 1976-c.”

CHAPTER 4

FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS: ORGANIZING AND EXPANDING

There is something dreadfully ill about a society which causes a woman to feel as though she must continually and vigilantly defend herself and her children against that society in order to survive.

—Wendy LeBlanc, *Naked Motherhood: Shattering Illusions and Sharing Truths*

The Council on Appalachian Women, or CAW as it was known, was founded in 1976 at Mars Hill College in North Carolina by 35 women who had met the previous month in Boone, North Carolina, at a meeting of the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs. On February 23, 1977, CAW was incorporated and an office was established in space donated by Mars Hill College, and Jeanne Hoffman was elected the first president of the organization.¹ Page one of CAW's mission statement stipulates that the organization was to become a means "whereby women of the Appalachian region may spur economic development" in the hope that economic development "will then spur private enterprise, leadership development, and more responsiveness to the medical, child care, educational, and economic needs of our region."²

The council existed on a volunteer basis for almost two years (1976-1978) before finally receiving a Demonstration Grant in June 1978 totaling \$54,360 from the Appalachian Regional Commission.³ The council also received two subsequent grants, one totaling \$54,590 in 1979 and another for \$50,728 in 1980 to assist in the efforts to educate

¹ CAW Collection, Box 10, Folder 12, "American Association of University Women, Grant Application, 1978."

² Ibid., Box 11, Folder 9, "Council on Appalachian Women, Inc. Mission Statement."

³ Ibid., Box 10, Folder 12, "American Association of University Women, Grant Application, 1978."

and support rural women.⁴ The organization received additional money through membership dues and donations from government agencies and larger corporations. The council received support from area organizations such as the North Carolina Humanities Committee, which awarded the council a \$12,000 grant in order to host educational forums. The council also received donations from churches, human service agencies in the region, and area companies such as Eastman Kodak. CAW also received funding from universities such as neighboring East Tennessee State University.⁵

Overcoming Stereotypes, Spreading the Word, and Forming a Network

According to its first newsletter, published in 1976, the primary purpose of the organization was to “develop methods to maintain communication between Appalachian women and provide support in the areas of education, service, and research” and to preserve the “uniqueness of the Appalachian woman growing out of her heritage and her environment.”⁶ Because the Appalachian region extends across such a large area, one of the primary obstacles hindering the council’s ability to offer support and services throughout Appalachia was the landscape of the region and the isolated geographical location of some of its inhabitants.

CAW emphasized that in order to make significant changes in the lives of women in the Appalachian region, one must first understand the obstacles, such as lack of educational opportunities, limited employment options, and the stereotypes about mountain people that have plagued the region for years. CAW worked to overcome the stereotypes of the

⁴ CAW Collection, Box 10, Folder 13, “Appalachian Community Services and Development, 1979.”

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., Box 14, Folder 12, “Newsletter,” 1979-1980.

region through education. CAW also worked to combat the isolation of the region due to the mountainous terrain by forming a communication network between various groups throughout the thirteen Appalachian states. The group not only worked to educate men and women within the region, it also worked to educate those outside the region on the inherent difficulties women in the Appalachian region face due to landscape. Since many Appalachian counties lagged behind the rest of the nation in economic development, per capita income, and employment rates, CAW worked to implement programs and services, such as the work program that allowed women to receive training and pay while working on road crews, in the rural, mountainous regions of North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and neighboring states.⁷

CAW also emphasized that until organizers, researchers, and members of advocacy groups and assistance organizations learned to understand the obstacles that women in the region faced due to lack of educational opportunities, traditional role expectations, and limited employment opportunity, organizers would be unable to address the issues of the region and bring about change.

Within the first year of its operation, the Council on Appalachian Women published and distributed numerous papers and pamphlets and conducted letter writing campaigns to solicit support for the new organization and to gain support for various bills being considered in Congress. It contacted funding agencies requesting funds to support its work and wrote to neighboring colleges and universities requesting that CAW be granted

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, "Government Income, Poverty, And Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2007," <http://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/p60-235.pdf>. (accessed October 16, 2008).

permission to hold lectures and symposia on the campus and published the *Magazine on Appalachian Women*.⁸

In a series titled *Images of Appalachian Women*, published in the Oct/Dec issue of *Appalachian Women* in 1979, historian Alice Mathews from Western Carolina University, urged her readers to “Look back to your mother and her mother and beyond. See the past as personal.”⁹ She goes on to urge the audience to, “see the past a personal” and describes how, “society may have defined the Woman’s Role rather narrowly, but reality has been multi-faceted. Individual women have freed themselves from the molds, the institutional rigidities, the stereotypes.”¹⁰ Jeanne T. Hoffman was one of those women who had ‘freed’ herself from the rigid bonds and expectations placed on women. She, and many other council members, understood that women in the Appalachian region faced not only the obstacles of overcoming traditional patriarchal views towards women that dictated their dependence on men as heads of households. CAW fought against the belief that a woman’s place is in the home and recognized that it was this traditional view of women that barred them from seeking educational and employment opportunities outside the accepted ‘woman’s’ sphere. CAW realized early on in its efforts that reform groups must recognize the role that racism, sexism, and classism in the reform efforts. The traditional patriarchal views that dominated the region must be met with opposition and the stereotypes of the region and the inhabitants must be eliminated in order to effect change. Stereotypes of women in the region seemed to indicate that strong, independent, intelligent, hard-

⁸ For information on the activities mentioned, see CAW Collection, Box 7 – 10.

⁹ CAW Collection. Box 14, Folder 16, “Newspaper Clippings, 1979-1980.”

¹⁰ Ibid.

working, and resourceful women who participated in leadership and community activism simply did not exist in the mountains of Southern Appalachia. Indeed, according to Sally Ward Maggard, “two distinct kinds of stereotypes, one romantic and the other degrading, dominate common notions of Appalachian women.”¹¹ Romantic imagery portrays the Appalachian woman as someone who is talented, makes beautiful quilts, spins wool into thread, and plays beautiful music on homemade instruments. The other stereotype, degrading women, brings to mind the images of Elly May Clampett and Grannie Clampett. Although Elly May Clampett and the popular show *The Beverly Hillbillies* was based on inhabitants of the Ozarks, not Appalachia, this character soon became synonymous with Appalachia and the hillbilly persona.¹² Maggard describes the women of the region as “quiet caretakers of an idealized rural mountain way of life.”¹³ Women were viewed as docile homemakers instead of fierce, independent, free-thinking hellions capable of fighting alongside men to save their homes, their lifestyle, and their livelihood.¹⁴ It is the second stereotype that the women of CAW hoped to eliminate.

CAW worked to overcome these stereotypes of women through a series of seminars about the region in order to educate everyone and offer an identity of the Appalachian

¹¹ Sally Ward Maggard, “Coalfield Women Making History,” in *Back Talk from Appalachia: Confronting Stereotypes*, ed. Dwight Billings, Gurney Norman, and Katherine Ledford (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 229.

¹² Elizabeth S. D. Englehardt, “Creating Appalachian Women’s Studies: Dancing Away from Granny and Elly May,” in *Beyond Hill and Hollow: Original Readings in Appalachian Women’s Studies*, ed. Elizabeth Englehardt (Athens, Ohio University Press, 2005), 2.

¹³ Maggard, “Coalfield Women Making History,” 229.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

people. CAW sponsored workshops on the music, religion, and crafts of the Appalachian region. Seminars were also offered placing women in the context of home, work, and community. These seminars served as an educational tool for both area residents and educators. In 1978, members of the council were invited by incoming East Tennessee State University president, Arthur DeRosier, who would be inaugurated as the fifth president of ETSU, to participate in the inaugural week during spring 1977. This venue offered the CAW directors an opportunity to extend their listening audience, gain additional support for programs initiated and supported by CAW, and offer seminars about the music, religion, traditions, beliefs, and inhabitants of the region. During this week, Dr. Diane Nelson, Professor of Biology at ETSU (1968- 2012), and Cynthia Burnley, a faculty member in the Department of Sociology (1969-2010), worked with CAW representatives to co-chair a presentation titled, "Women Living in Appalachia: Our Common Bonds."¹⁵

This seminar was one of many organized by the council and made possible by a \$54,000 grant from ARC was earmarked specifically to fund educational seminars. Over the next three years (1978–1980), CAW offered several seminars, presentations, and lectures that discussed the customs and traditions of the region and the resources and strengths of the mountain people. Speakers in venues across the Appalachian region discussed the educational system and the need for improvements. Groups also discussed mountain music, crafts, and other topics in the series titled "The Many Faces of Appalachia as Reflected in the Humanist Mirror."¹⁶

¹⁵ CAW Collection, Box 12, Folder 19, "East Tennessee State University, March 1978 – January 1978."

¹⁶ Ibid., Box 12, Folder 26, "Forum and Conference Ideas, undated."

The council understood the necessity of overcoming the stereotypes of the region and sponsored educational forums by Clay Edwards on “The Little Red School House” and by Vernon Chapman and Gerald Eller on the “Changing Patterns in Public Schools and Higher Education.” The group also offered seminars on the people of the region, their beliefs, and traditions. Loyal Jones presented a talk titled “Who Are We? Origins and Characteristics,” and Robert Harmon and Roger Whitener discussed “Mountain Music” and “Folkways and Superstition.” CAW also offered a venue to discuss religion, with the presentation “Gettin Right” presented by Minister Jim Long, lay person Bea Hensley, and religious educator Jim Blevins.¹⁷

In 1979, a series of seminars were offered covering topics concerning the heritage and people of Appalachia, the customs and traditions of the region, and the resources and strengths of the mountain people and the land. Additional workshops, from September to March 1980, taught those in and outside the region, about “A Woman’s Place: In Her Family” presented by Dr. Linda Scott, a professor of philosophy at East Tennessee State University; “A Woman’s Place: At Work,” presented by Dr. Helen Lewis, a faculty member in the Sociology Department at Appalachian State University; and “A Woman’s Place: At Play” by Dr. Janice Faulkner, a professor of English at East Carolina University. Many other workshops discussed women in religion, women in education, and women in government.¹⁸ This collaborative series brought together women from several universities and organizations throughout the Appalachian region and allowed CAW to extend the

¹⁷ CAW Collection, Box 12, Folder 26, “Forum and Conference Ideas, undated.”

¹⁸ Ibid., Box 13, Folder 4, “Humanities Grant, NC Council on the Status of Women, 1980-1981.”

current contact list, develop new connections and strengthen current ties, and provide greater support for the programs offered.

The forums hosted by CAW offered activists groups, women's groups, educators, and community leaders an opportunity to learn about the Appalachian region. Without an accurate understanding of the region, the traditions, and the people, effective support services and communication networks could not be established. Sustainable change would only occur if women were able to unite, work together, communicate with one another and form a viable support network. The forums also offered CAW an opportunity to address the inequalities in the educational system, lack of high-paying jobs, and the scarcity of vocational training opportunities for women by helping them seek out and apply for scholarships in higher education. These forums provided CAW with access to professional educators, administrators, and faculty members in an attempt to strengthen their relationship with area schools and boost membership opportunities. CAW gained direct access to women who could write in support of CAW and its efforts to provide equal and adequate opportunities for women. These women could also lobby schools, colleges, universities, and government agencies and advocate for change in the current educational system and the inequalities in the wage scale that existed for men and women.¹⁹

CAW not only funded speakers and seminars, it also published and distributed newsletters and pamphlets as a way of supplying information regarding upcoming events and meetings. A bi-monthly newsletter was published and distributed at meetings and handed out at rallies and fundraisers. This newsletter included information regarding upcoming meetings, courses offered by CAW, and information regarding programs, such as

¹⁹ CAW Collection, Box 13, Folder 4, "Humanities Grant, NC Council on the Status of Women, 1980-1981."

the program designed to address family instability. This program included a position paper on The Family and Child Development in the Appalachian Region, which was made available to individuals attending the ARC Conference held in Asheville, North Carolina, in November 1978 entitled, "Raising a New Generation in Appalachia."²⁰

The council also published the *Magazine of Appalachian Women or MAW*. *MAW* began in 1977 in West Virginia and was published by Miriam Ralston and later purchased by CAW in 1979. According to Martha Allen, writer for the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press," the publishers of *MAW* wanted to "provide a communication network for women in this region to share their information and experiences."²¹ "When the Council was established in November 1976," wrote Jane Weeks in the first issue of *Appalachian Women*, "one main goal was to set up a communication network for women in the region." In late 1979, *MAW*, renamed *Appalachian Women*, became a quarterly published by the Council of Appalachian Women, and this new acquisition allowed CAW to reach a greater audience and to address violence, abuse, neglect, education, healthcare, employment, and current laws regarding women in Appalachia, as well as elsewhere in the country.²² The subscriber list was also used to increase the distribution of material and served to boost the membership of the council.

²⁰ CAW Collection, Box 23, Folder 9, "Change Over – MAW, to Appalachian Women Writers, July 1977-January 1980," Box 25, Folders 2, "Magazine Content, January 1979-January 1980," Box 25, Folder 3, "Magazine Promotional Flier, undated," and Box 25, Folder 7, "Negotiations with MAW: Magazine for Appalachian Women, June-August 1978, March-May 1979."

²¹ Martha Allen, "Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press," <http://www.wifp.org/womensmediach5.html>, [accessed February 23, 2012].

²² CAW Collection, Box 23, Folder 9 "Change Over – MAW, to Appalachian Women Writers, July 1977-1980."

The council published several issues of the magazine, but the management and cost involved in maintaining a magazine of this size proved to be too much for the group and the magazine was given to the Women's Council of West Virginia for management in February 1981.²³ Once the task of attempting to overcome existing stereotypes through education, conferences, and seminars was underway, CAW faced another daunting task, forming an effective communication network for residents who lived in rural, mountainous portions of the area. CAW addressed this issue through conducting letter writing campaigns, composing publications, creating and distributing a contact list of assistance groups, forming legal aid, and support groups throughout the region, and by establishing a working relationship with other women's organizations.

CAW's efforts also included a letter writing campaign spearheaded by Jeanne Hoffman, the first president of CAW (1977-1979). Hoffman began the campaign to create a support network in Appalachia by first contacting Herbert Wey, Chancellor of Appalachian State University, in 1977. In a letter to Wey, Hoffman emphasized that "Rural Appalachian Women are not only economically, socially, and politically deprived, but they live out their lives in discriminatory circumstances which women in the larger urban society might to some extent be able to deal with through organized support groups."²⁴ Hoffman went on to explain that CAW offers these women just that, a support network and a means of obtaining an education, higher wages, and an opportunity to participate in an array of job training, childcare and healthcare, driver training courses, and other programs to enhance the lives

²³ CAW Collection, Box 23, Folder 9 "Change Over – MAW, to Appalachian Women Writers, July 1977-1980."

²⁴ Ibid., Box 12, Folder 4, "Appalachian State University, June – September 1977. "

of women in rural Appalachia.²⁵ Appalachian State University offered strong support to CAW and worked with the group to offer forums for women in the region.

Not only did CAW work to publish information about the region and promote the various programs offered, it solicited information from women's organizations throughout the region and across the country regarding scholarships, research projects, job opportunities, and employment.²⁶ All the information was published in the bi-monthly newsletter and distributed to resource centers and job agencies throughout the region. Thanks to a grant from ARC that supported CAW's work, the women of the region were allowed an opportunity to advocate for equality. In 1979, ARC press writer Ann Anderson described CAW as "an unusual organization quietly working to give women broader opportunities for education, better tools for improving their economic status, and a new sense of purpose and self-awareness." By 1980, the group would be plagued with internal conflict and arguing among board members regarding the distribution of power among its leaders.²⁷

They Taught. They Learned

Many of the seminars offered by CAW centered on the region and the educational system and CAW's work to enhance the educational opportunities for girls and women in the region. CAW offered seminars on "A Little Learnin," the "Little Red School House," and "Changing Patterns in Public Schools." These seminars were geared towards emphasizing

²⁵ CAW Collection, Box 23, Folder 9 "Change Over – MAW, to Appalachian Women Writers, July 1977-1980."

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., Box 14, Folder 12, "News Releases, November 1979 – January 1980."

the importance of a good education and also used as a tool by the Council to open the channels of communication regarding women and girls in the educational system. In addition to the seminars sponsored by CAW, the group also participated in the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs held on August 25, 1977. At this meeting, Patricia Beaver, Vice President of CAW, recognized the "growing awareness of the need for programs and advocacy for the Appalachian woman which recognize the complex interaction of racism, sexism, and classism"²⁸ and how these factors played a crucial role in the lives of women.²⁹ She announced that the prevalence of these factors in schools and training programs continued to perpetuate the inequalities. Beaver emphasized that these factors "confine" women to the traditional roles and gender stereotypes that are so prevalent in communities, laws, and the educational system in Appalachia, throughout the United States, and other countries throughout the world.³⁰

Beaver had drafted a position paper in 1976, which was submitted to Congress explaining the educational needs of women and encouraging organization of women's groups in as many areas of Appalachia as possible.³¹ Beaver emphasized that education should be used to "inspire women and girls in the Southern Appalachians from southeastern Virginia to Northern Georgia to develop and use their mental, physical, and spiritual resources."³² Because it placed such a strong emphasis on educating women, CAW

²⁸ CAW Collection, Box 15, Folder 9, "Position Papers, 1976-1979."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., Box 14, Folder 4, "Mine Safety Committee, 1979."

participated in the First Annual Meeting on Education held at Western Carolina University in Cullowhee, North Carolina, on October 7, 1977 and attend the inaugural meeting entitled “Growing up Female in Appalachia”. CAW pledged its support to promote and support conferences and forums which “increase dialogue between women at all economic and educational levels in Appalachia” and provide funding and scholarship information to “keep women informed as to any money which is available for services, research, or educational projects for women.”³³

A later meeting held in 1979 and hosted by PEER (Project on Equal Education Rights), CAW and other reform groups discussed equal education for boys and girls.³⁴ PEER received a grant from the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, for the project on equality in the school system. PEER worked with parents, community groups, and area schools to achieve equal education for boys and girls and to provide the same opportunities for all children regardless of race, class, or gender. At this meeting, organizers from PEER provided a brief overview of the educational system and explained that “when the American System of Public Education was forming, a woman’s place was, by and large in the home.” But during the 1970s this trend was beginning to change as more and more women were expected to have to support themselves and perhaps their families.³⁵ PEER offered materials on sexism in schools and information regarding Title IX, which prohibits exclusion from participation in or discrimination

³³ CAW Collection, Box 15, Folder 11, “President’s Annual Report, 1978.”

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., Box 15, Folder 14, “Project of Equal Education Rights, Summer 1978-February 1979.”

against, any individual by any education program or activity that receives federal funding on the basis of gender.³⁶

CAW announced upcoming events hosted by PEER, such as the seminar held for North Carolina parents, community groups, and schools on the discrimination that girls face in the local schools. CAW also reported that without a solid education, women were forced to take low-paying, menial, and dead-end jobs and emphasized that the schools themselves were guilty of discrimination because four out of ten girls enrolled in vocational education were learning homemaking skills, not skills that would assist them in finding paid employment. The schools also held to the trend of placing women in positions that paid less than did those that were referred to men. Information listed in the CAW annual report also indicates that “two-thirds of classroom teachers are women, yet women are only a fraction of America’s school administrators.”³⁷ School curriculum courses offered for girls steered them away from math and science, which are essential for well-paying jobs in increasingly technological fields, and towards homemaking courses and, thus, continued the pattern of relegating girls to the home and service jobs.

CAW also announced a workshop by Barbara Camaro, hosted by PEER, on “Cracking the Glass Slipper.” Camaro stated that this workshop was offered as an “action guide and training guide (A how-to-do-it kit) to parents and community members.”³⁸ Camaro, who was trying to set up workshops on equality in education in ten to fifteen North Carolina communities, believed that “women get tracked into these jobs from childhood and are

³⁶ CAW Collection, Box 15, Folder 11, “President’s Annual Report, 1978.”

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., Box 15, Folder 14, “Project of Equal Education Rights, Summer 1978-February 1979.”

confined by the kind of stereotypes that encourage a boy with high aptitude for science to be a doctor and a girl with the same aptitude to be a lab technician.”³⁹ The kit explained to parents and advocacy groups “what to look at, what questions to ask, and who to ask” when they have concerns regarding the quality of education afforded to their child. The kit also explained that Title IX, the federal law barring sex discrimination in education that was enacted on June 23, 1972, was made possible by the Women’s Legal Defense and Education Fund. The National Organization for Women’s Legal Defense and Education Fund has continued to work on policy development and issues related to women’s equality in education since it was founded in 1966. The organization also works to insure equal educational opportunities, eliminate gender stereotypes from textbooks, ensure that girls be allowed to participate in athletics, and ensure that educational facilities uphold the laws written in Title IX’s promise.⁴⁰

PEER, CAW, and Barbara Camaro worked to “break the glass slipper” and create a school system that would acknowledge a young girls abilities and push girls to pursue careers as doctors, lawyers, and business owners.⁴¹ Diane Nelson, who became a Biology instructor in the early 1970s and worked with CAW to host forums on education at ETSU, is a perfect example of how women can break into male-dominated fields. CAW worked to open doors for girls to pursue their interest. CAW worked to offer programs on healthcare, infant mortality, birth control, job training, car maintenance, education, spousal abuse, social security, and many other factors that keep women from achieving their full potential.

³⁹ CAW Collection, Box 15, Folder 14, “Project of Equal Education Rights, Summer 1978-February 1979.”

⁴⁰ Women’s Legal Defense Fund, “Legal Momentum: The Women’s Legal Defense and Education Fund,” <http://www.legalmomentum.org/> [Accessed: February 12, 2012].

⁴¹ CAW Collection, Box 18, Folder 3, “Washington Women’s Network, 1978.”

Rolling Up Our Sleeves

According to Eileen Boris and S. J. Kleinberg in “Mothers and Other Workers,” between the Progressive Era and the 1970s, “few historians focused on women workers inside and outside the home, in factories, or in fields.”⁴² In the 1970s, labor historians finally began paying attention to women in the workforce and scholarly literature began a discussion of the roles women played in the industrial revolution factory workers, the work they did in the mines, and the work they accomplished as mine safety advocates.⁴³ Boris and Kleinberg discuss that gender has actually meant different things to men and women in their article “Mothers and Other Workers.” They argue that “for most men, gendered labor meant higher wages, status and more autonomy.” Gendered labor for women typically resulted in segregation into what was considered unskilled jobs that paid less than those held by men.⁴⁴ CAW was again on the cutting edge of heralding that education, gender, and job earnings were connected and, as such, it followed in the footsteps of earlier advocates, such as Mother Jones, in labor reform.⁴⁵ Because women were paid less than men due to the types of jobs they received, CAW worked to offer job training programs, such as construction and large machine operations, in order to create opportunities for women in male-dominated fields.

⁴² Eileen Boris and S. J. Kleinberg, “Mothers and Other Workers: (Re) Conceiving Labor, Maternalism, and the State,” *Journal of Women’s History* 15, no 3 (Autumn 2012): 93.

⁴³ Ibid., 95.

⁴⁴ Boris and Kleinberg, “Mothers and Other Workers,” 95.

⁴⁵ Born Mary Harris, Mother Jones, welcomed African American workers and involved women and children in strikes. She advocated for mine workers in Kansas City, Birmingham, Alabama, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Colorado, and across the United States. For more on Mother Jones see: Betsy Kraft’s book, *Mother Jones: One Woman’s Fight for Labor* (New York: Clarion Books, 1995).

The Council on Appalachian Women spent a large portion of the money received from supporting grants on job training and adult education programs. CAW founders understood the correlation between education and earnings and worked to offer educational opportunities and job training in an effort to establish women as wage earners. Council organizers also understood the relationship between education and receiving a high paying job. Training courses and educational seminars had been offered by CAW for over two years prior to its participation in the 1979 Rural Coalition. This coalition claimed that “women and older adults with families are community bound and without access to education and training programs women would be extremely limited in their ability to make higher salaries or be promoted to better jobs.”⁴⁶

CAW worked with the coalition and pledged its support for this program and worked to provide community-based adult education programs and job training courses for women. CAW supported the coalition, PEER, the American Council on Education, and the Office on Women in Higher Education, and many other groups because of education’s importance in gaining higher paying jobs for women. CAW worked to boost awareness regarding several legislative bills under review at both the state and federal level. It published information regarding upcoming legislation and encouraged groups and organizations to support certain laws and bills under review that pertained to women and children, such as the Fraser-Keyes Bill. CAW published flyers and newsletters announcing upcoming speakers, training opportunities, and seminars. It paid close attention to all upcoming legislation under review and in 1977-1978, the council worked to influence the outcome of a number of laws that would positively or negatively affect women.

⁴⁶ CAW Collection, Box 17, Folder 1, “Rural Coalition, December 1978 - December 1979.”

CAW stressed the importance of supporting HR 6360, designed to “eliminate the state gift tax on property or assets passed on to surviving spouses” and to prevent widows from having to sell their homes and farms in order to pay taxes on the property.⁴⁷ Hoffman and CAW members also supported the HR 9902, an accompanying bill to HR 6360.⁴⁸ HR 9902 was sponsored by Representative Martha Keyes in the 95th Congress (1977-78) and was written to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1954. This bill allows the continuation of a farm’s “family farm” status (for estate purposes) even when the owner, “a woman whose husband has died” hires a farm manager to oversee production and daily activities.⁴⁹ CAW worked to change legislation regarding benefits for women and laws related to land ownership.

CAWs work to educate women did not focus on academics. The organization also sought to educate women regarding their legal rights and worked to battle domestic abuse and violence against women and children. CAW showed support for the Kentucky House Bill 750, later known as the Domestic Abuse Act. This act, introduced by Representative Gerta Bendl, was significant in that the husband-wife privilege could not be used to block evidence of abuse and the law also made it possible for organization to begin collecting data concerning the pattern of men to use physical violence as a means of resolving domestic disputes.⁵⁰ The bill was enacted February 28, 1978, and was designed to provide protection against domestic abuse. The council office solicited support for the bill,

⁴⁷ CAW Collection, Box 12. Folder 29, “Fund Raising, Council on Appalachian Women, November 1979.”

⁴⁸ The Library of Congress, <http://thomas.loc.gov/home/LegislativeData.php?&n=Browse&c=98> (accessed: February 18, 2012).

⁴⁹ CAW Collection, Box 12, Folder 29, “Fund Raising, Council on Appalachian Women, November 1979.”

⁵⁰ Ibid.

published information regarding a woman's legal rights, worked with shelters for battered women, and offered legal assistance to victims of abuse.

As before, with the HR 3247 and HR 6360 bills, CAW president Jeanne Hoffman and other members of the group published information in the organization's monthly newsletters soliciting support for the bill. CAW also distributed information and encouraged women to write their representatives supporting this bill. CAW encouraged other women's groups, members, and the public to spread the word regarding bills that would directly affect or support women and emphasized the need for women to speak out in support of these bills.⁵¹ CAW members rallied support for legislation relevant to women's rights, equal access to education, protection against domestic abuse, and the right to equality.

CAW worked with groups and organization to fight back against abuse and members of the group attended the Southeast Region Conference of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) in Cosby, Tennessee. At this meeting, CAW pledged its support to the women in Newport, Morristown, and Johnson City, Tennessee, who were working to begin shelters and programs for battered women in the region.⁵² The council worked to change state and federal laws regarding domestic abuse and marched at the forefront of the women's movement in tackling such issues as birth control, rape, gender bias, sexual assault, and domestic violence. CAW fought against domestic violence by supporting area shelters, offering financial and legal assistance for victims, an emergency

⁵¹ CAW Collection, Box 12, Folder 31, "Grail Women's Project"; Box 28, Folder 9, "Domestic Violence, undated"; Box 28, Folder 10, "Domestic Violence, July 1977 – October 1980"; Box 30, Folder 14, "Rights, Human, January 1979 – December 1981."

⁵² Ibid., Box 14, Folder 5, "Monthly Reports, Executive Director, 1980."

loan fund for women facing crisis situations, and by soliciting support for House Bill 499 (the Domestic Abuse Act), proposed March 9, 1978.⁵³

The council continued to meet one of the greatest needs for women all over the region, a need for a network of communication and the establishment of a resource center. This center offered information on employment opportunities, educational scholarship, legal aid, healthcare, and workshops. The wealth of information provided by CAW regarding other women's groups throughout the region provided women with a connection to those beyond the hills. CAW offered an opportunity for women to learn about domestic violence and other crimes against women, the ability to make choices regarding their futures, and an opportunity to become financially self-sufficient. While the organization was able to accomplish many of its initial goals, to provide support in the areas of education, service, and research for the women of Appalachia, the group was not able to continue its work after 1981 due to lack of support and funding. During the first two years the council elected officials, began collecting data pertinent to the women of the region, and succeeded in establishing a resource center that would provide educational and support services to aid women. One of the requirements mandated by ARC from the council was the creation of a communication network among various organizations throughout the region. While CAW succeeded in forming relationships with other groups, the relationships among board members was becoming strained as they disagreed on the types of programs offered, the wielding of power and the perception that the organization was too heavily controlled by North Carolina women, and the direction of the programs (academic versus social).

⁵³ CAW Collection, Box 13, Folder 12, "Kentucky Legislation, 1978."

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

For the first time we are in a position to look around us at the Kingdom of our Fathers and take its measure. What we see is the one system which recorded civilization has never actively challenged, and which has been so universal as to seem a law of nature.

—Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*

What Went Wrong and Where They Are Now

In year three of its existence, CAW struggled to remain financially solvent while attempting to offer as many programs and services for women in the region as possible. The group launched several seminar tours regarding the region in its campaign to educate and established a communication network and information clearing house for scholarship information, legal assistance, counseling services, job training programs, and other women's resources in the region. While the seminars were well received and the programs offered were widely popular, the group struggled to present a united front.

In the three years since CAW received its initial grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the group elected three different executive directors: Jeanne Hoffman held office from May 23, 1978 until June 1979; Constance Mahoney served from January until June 1980; and then in January 1981, Ethelene Brasington served for the remainder of the contract with ARC. During its three years, CAW was without an executive director for fourteen of the thirty-six months it existed and the group seemed without direction for much of its existence.¹ The initial set of goals presented to ARC encompassed too much and the group attempted to do too much, address too many diversified issues and

¹ CAW Collection, Archives of Appalachia, Biographical /Historical Note, <http://archives.etsu.edu/?p=core/search&creatorid=464>

problems for every level of women (both socioeconomic and educational) and encompass too many programs. This task proved too difficult, not simply because the organization refused to narrow its focus or the lack of funding, but also because the organizational infrastructure was beginning to crumble. The task of offering assistance to such a large geographic area from a central office in a somewhat isolated corner of North Carolina proved to be ineffective and funding constraints eliminated the possibility of establishing regional coordinators throughout the various states.

One of the biggest difficulties for CAW was that the problems that the organization attempted to address were too diverse. The organization attempted to address multifaceted issues for a heterogeneous population scattered throughout a large region. Each state had specific areas of interest that made it impossible for CAW to deal with all of them. For example, Kentucky women were interested in coal employment; while East Tennessee women's major concern was "up the hollow women."² In an evaluation of the council written in 1981, Ethelene Brasington, the final director of the organization, warned that the council must "guard against the danger of tunnel vision" and the importance of narrowing the group's focus in order to better serve the women of the region.³ This inability to narrow the focus of the group proved to be a major constraint for CAW and the problems inherent in having an "inexperienced board with board members vying for power coupled with the personality conflicts manifested in the meetings," meant that CAW was unable to focus the interest of the organization and lacking funds to host training and team building workshops for the management of the organization, the group members became scattered.

² CAW Collection, Box 12, Folder 23, "Evaluation of Council, 1981."

³ Ibid.

The group continued to request information and solicit assistance from agencies throughout the thirteen states, but eventually the branch office became more of a clearing house for information regarding services rather than a program offering services.

Internal turmoil caused a rift among the founders of the organization and disagreements among board members regarding the election of a new president, the location of a central office, and the perceived distribution of power among members proved too much for the fledgling organization and eventually caused its downfall. CAW's internal struggles and the vying for power among board members did not go unnoticed by the news media. In a newspaper article titled, "Appalachian Women: Learning the Pain of Power," Barbara Asbury, writer for the *Knoxville News-Sentinel*, brought the disagreements of the council to light. At the annual meeting of the Council on Appalachian Women held in Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, in October 1979, the arguments among council members regarding the direction of the organization became apparent. One faction favored a new "slate of officers," while the other favored re-election of the 1978-79 administration. One group advocated for the reelection of Barbara Salisbury, while the other preferred to keep Knoxville Jane Weeks as president.⁴ The struggle for power among the group members played out in front of newspaper reporters. In her article Asbury stressed that many within the group expressed concerns that the organization was becoming "heavily controlled by North Carolina women," and that too many of "those women were academically oriented rather than the 'up the holler' women the council was created to aid."⁵ According to Asbury, "speaker after speaker spoke hopefully of unity, of

⁴ CAW Collection, Box 14, Folder 16, "Newspaper clippings, 1979 – 1980."

⁵ CAW Collection, Box 14, Folder 16, "Newspaper clippings, 1979 – 1980."

recovery, of the importance of working together," but ultimately the group was not able to agree on an outcome.⁶ Members struggled to understand the opposition of Weeks and stated that during her administration CAW membership had doubled to 581 members, and the organization established a toll-free number for the CAW office, held educational programs in 29 counties in western North Carolina, and established many other beneficial programs in the region. Ultimately many members were convinced "that their president was not providing effective leadership."⁷ Jeanne Hoffman, founder of the organization, was accused of being the "source of the anti-Weeks movement" and was heavily criticized as "keeping too much of the growth only in her state and among her kind of people – academicians."⁸ Hoffman was unable to assure the group that she supported Weeks and her administration and that the membership was comprised of "not only educators, but also community action people and housewives involved in volunteer work."⁹

Hoffman claimed that the leading causes for the current turmoil stemmed from the administration's own inability to "deal with the tremendous growth of the organization," as well as "the failure of communication between the office and the board member."¹⁰ It was at this meeting that Hoffman announced her retirement from the council and stated that her function was to "see the council launched, and it is launched."¹¹ According to Asbury,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ CAW Collection, Box 14, Folder 16, "Newspaper clippings, 1979 – 1980."

“feelings were strong,” as many women in the group spoke of “unity and the importance of working together.”¹²

Barbara Salisbury, acting president during this time (1979), agreed with Hoffman’s assessment regarding the lack of communication and unwise spending habits of the program directors and made plans to demand more accountability from board members regarding spending. Salisbury also agreed with the many voices calling for unity and reminded the directors that they served as a “liaison between the members in their district and the council office” in order to enhance communication between the main office and programs scattered throughout the region.¹³ This meeting, as described by Sister Noel, Vice President of CAW, as “birth pains”, in reality marked the beginning of the end for the organization. Noel was quoted as stating, “I think that the heart and the spirit of the organization is still strong,” despite what happened at the Lake Junaluska meeting.¹⁴ Sadly, her optimism regarding the ability of the members to set aside difference was exaggerated and the turmoil and resentment of the meeting caused a rift between the two factions that could not be mended. The negative press on the meeting also caught the attention of its sponsoring office, the Appalachian Regional Commission, and how ARC questioning the abilities of the organization and the future of the group.

A letter dated November 12, 1980, from Vivian Thompson, Project Coordinator for the Appalachian Regional Commission, to Charlotte Ross, President of CAW in 1980, carried the news that CAW was in danger of violating the terms of its initial contract. Thompson

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

also warned in her letter that the organization would not receive additional funding from ARC if board members were not able to reach a consensus regarding the direction of the movement. One of the primary detrimental decisions made by board members was to relocate the central office at Mars Hill College to another location (not discussed in the records) due to a conflict among members regarding the distribution of power. Many felt that Hoffman and her camp followers were holding too much power in the organization and holding the program too close to home. Thompson went on to explain that although CAW met its initial requirement of establishing of a resource center for women in the Appalachian region, the organization failed to accomplish the goals of offering services and assistance to women throughout the thirteen states. Instead CAW focused most of its attention on women in North Carolina and less attention on women in Tennessee, Virginia, and neighboring states.¹⁵ The solution was not to relocate the office but for the board to narrow the focus of the organization to specific task oriented goals and provide direction for the programs offered. Thompson also went on to explain that ARC believed that the internal conflicts among the administrators prevented the group from achieving the “tasks it contracted to perform” and emphasized that board members had to work together to achieve the goals set forth by the organization in 1978. Thompson warned that if the members were unable to unite that the group should begin to “seek funding outside the ARC for expansion purposes.”¹⁶

The primary reason ARC chose not to fund the council further appears to be the intent of certain board members to replace the resource center already in existence at Mars

¹⁵ CAW Collection, Box 11, Folder 9, “Appalachian Regional Commission correspondence, 1979-1980.”

¹⁶ CAW Collection, Box 11, Folder 9, “Appalachian Regional Commission correspondence, 1979-1980.”

Hill, which was “prohibited under the terms of the ARC contract,” and the inability of the board members to continue working together to achieve the goals of the organization. Thompson told Ross to reestablish the CAW office at Mars Hill as its chief base of operation, familiarize board members with the content of the CAW/ARC contract agreement, remain within the budget submitted to the commission, and submit a letter as soon as possible designating the council’s new project director.¹⁷ The disagreements among board members and the resentments that surfaced during the Lake Junaluska meeting proved too much for CAW. The organizations could not fulfill the requirements set forth in Thompson’s letter. Key members of the organization, Jeanne Hoffman and Barbara Salisbury, split from the group apparently taking much of the “heart and spirit” of the organization with them.

CAW’s struggle to obtain funding, the organization’s attempt to encompass too many projects for such a large, diversified region, and the attempt to administer such a large undertaking from a small central office all contributed greatly to the demise of the organization in 1981. However, the organization of letter writing campaigns, seminars, and job training programs was far reaching. CAW’s networking campaign allowed it to establish contacts with neighboring groups in order to cover such a large area. As stated by Jeanne Hoffman, because, “each state or region had specific areas of interest,” it was impossible to deal with all of them with any measure of success but CAW met this challenge by approaching the needs of women in the region individually rather than attempting to apply a “fix-all” cure. CAW worked to offer assistance based on individual needs by going into the

¹⁷ Ibid.

communities and meeting with the women in their homes, but the task proved too difficult for the organization.¹⁸

CAW's failure to receive additional funding from ARC was an important cause for its demise in 1981. CAW also failed to receive funding from other organizations, such as the Kellogg Foundation, Women's Educational Equity Act, the Mott Foundation, and Levi Strauss, because of the group's inability to form clear and concise goals and narrow its focus to specific causes proved too difficult for foundations to justify funding further programs under CAW leadership.¹⁹

The ability of the organization to handle all its concerns at every locale in the region was impossible. The council had the potential of being a very effective organization, but the group's inability to narrow its focus and develop fewer, better defined goals greatly diminished its effectiveness as a reform organization.²⁰ Although the organization established far-reaching goals, all of which it could not meet, it still enjoyed a measure of success in establishing offices and creating a communication network. Even though the group worked on a limited budget over a vast region, the positive results of the council were evident by establishment of Coal Employment Project, Mountain Women's Exchange, Rural American Women, Appalachian Studies Association, and other organizations created to meet the specific issues and goals of women within the region.²¹

¹⁸ CAW Collection, Box 15, Folder 9, "Position Papers, 1976-1979."

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ CAW Collection, Box 15, Folder 9, "Position Papers, 1976-1979."

CAW disbanded in 1981, but the work did not stop there for many of its founders and participants. The initial founders of the Council on Appalachian Women went on to pursue educational goals, direct other programs related to Appalachian and Women's Studies, pursue research interests, publish books and articles about the region, and continued to work with activists groups that focused on increasing educational and economic opportunities for women.

Jeanne Hoffman, the founder of the Council on Appalachian Women and the inaugural president of the organization, officially resigned as executive director in 1979. Since that time, Hoffman served as the Charter President of the Madison County Chamber of Commerce and is currently serving as Chairman of the Board for the Better Business Bureau of Western North Carolina. She went on to become a realtor in the Mars Hill community and owns her own real estate firm in North Carolina.²² Hoffman left activist work to pursue business interests – and maybe her experience at CAW played a role in that decision.

Patricia Beaver, Vice President of CAW in 1977, is currently a Professor of Anthropology and Director of the Center for Appalachian Studies at Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina. Beaver received her doctorate in anthropology from Duke University in 1976 and her areas of interest include: Appalachian culture, social organization, gender, cultural diversity, culture in the American South, gender and family organization, and race and ethnicity in Appalachia and China. Dr. Beaver has conducted research in Appalachia and China, with particular interests in community, family, and public policy as well as issues related to gender, class, and ethnicity. She was project

²² For more on Jeanne Hoffman see: http://www.zoominfo.com/people/Hoffman_Jeanne_47092652.aspx

director of the Appalachian Land Ownership Study (discussed in *Who Owns Appalachia*, University Press of Kentucky 1983), co-editor with Burton Purrington of *Cultural Adaption's to Mountain Environments* (University of Georgia Press, 1984), author of "Cratis D. Williams", "The Council on Appalachian Women", and "The Center for Appalachian Studies" that appear in the 2006 *Encyclopedia of Appalachia*.²³

Linda Scott DeRosier, who participated in a series of seminars titled "Makin' a Livin' – Makin' a Life," hosted by CAW in 1979, and "A Woman's Place: In Her Family," (1980), was born in Boons Camp, Kentucky.²⁴ She received her Bachelor of Science degree from Pikeville College and went on to complete a cross-disciplinary doctorate in philosophy, education, and psychology at the University of Kentucky. Dr. DeRosier also holds two masters degrees, one from Eastern Kentucky University and one from Harvard University. She is the former editor of the *Southeastern Women's Studies Newsletter* and is the author of publications on teaching, psychology, and culture. DeRosier was the Director of The Institute for Appalachian Studies at East Tennessee State University from 1978 to 1980. Her most well-known work, *Creeker: A Woman's Journey* (published by the University Press of Kentucky in October, 1999), is a memoir of a young woman growing up in rural Eastern Kentucky. DeRosier is currently a Professor of Psychology at Rocky Mountain College in Billings, Montana, where she has worked since 1988.²⁵ DeRosier has

²³ For more on Patricia Beaver see the Appalachian State University website at <http://anthro.appstate.edu/people/faculty-and-staff/patricia-d-beaver>.

²⁴ CAW Collection, Box 13, Folder 4, "Humanities Grant, North Carolina Council on the Status of Women, 1980-81."

²⁵ For more on Linda Scott DeRosier visit her website at <http://www.lindascottderosier.com/>

continued to advocate for women through her academic work and most of her publications center around women's issues.

Diana Nelson, who co-chaired the planning committee for the workshop "Women Living in Appalachia: Out Common Bonds," sponsored by CAW and hosted by East Tennessee State University, received her PhD from the University of Tennessee in 1973.²⁶ She became a professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at East Tennessee State University in 1972. She became an Emerita Professor of the department in 1999. Dr. Nelson is a member of many national and international societies and has received awards from the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Tennessee Academy of Science. She has received grants from the National Geographic Society, National Science Foundation (NSF), and served as a NATO Senior Fellowship in Science. Nelson has served as a consultant for the Smithsonian Institution. Nelson has served on the ETSU Women's studies organization committee (1979), served on the NSF Women in Science Workshop (1980), and also has published numerous works regarding her research in marine biology and on the Phylum Tardigrada.²⁷ Dr. Nelson's career as a biologist demonstrates what women can accomplish in a traditionally "male- dominated field." Her work to educate young girls in a scientific field serves as a continuation of the goals set by CAW founders to educate women and break the barriers set by gender stereotyping.

Many of the women who participated in establishing CAW and its supporters were already in academic fields. This allowed them to continue the pursuit of educating once the

²⁶ CAW Collection, Box 12, Folder 19, "East Tennessee State University, March 1978 - January 1979."

²⁷ East Tennessee State University, Department of Biological Sciences.
<http://www.etsu.edu/cas/biology/facultystaff/alpha.aspx>

group disbanded in 1981. The women of CAW continued to open doors for women, break down barriers, and fight to change the stereotypes about Appalachia, especially Appalachian women. Some, like Jeanne Hoffman, walked away from the struggles of educating to focus on other goals, such as becoming involved in community politics and becoming a business owner. Regardless of the path many of these women chose to take after their involvement in CAW, their contributions to the educational system of the region, their work to re-define women's roles in society, and their work to break gender barriers for women has left a lasting legacy on the Appalachian region.

The Council on Appalachian Women: Short Lived but Long Lasting

CAW was not a failure for the simple reason that the organization established a resource center to assist women, contributed greatly to job training and educational attainment for women, provided counseling and support services to women in rural Appalachia, and established a communication network in the rural, mountainous region of Appalachia.²⁸ My research established that CAW's work to understand and acknowledge the stereotypes and biases concerning the region and its inhabitants and its focus on women created a model for future reform groups. CAW joined the ranks of reform movements in the region, and outside the region, because it placed great importance on educational programs. CAW worked to expand its focus to include creating equal opportunity for education and employment possibilities, adequate healthcare, and obtaining life skills and knowledge that would allow women to break into male-dominated fields. These new skills would allow women to obtain higher paying jobs and the knowledge allowed them to learn about harassment and discrimination, and fight for their

²⁸ CAW Collection, Box 15, Folder 9, "Position Paper, 1976-c."

place in a changing world. CAW was similar to other reform organizations discussed in this thesis. Like the Frontier Nursing Service and the Hindman Settlement School, emphasis was placed on educating and incorporating the values and traditions of the people of the region into the reform activities and assistance programs offered. CAW, the Hindman School, and the Pine Mountain School all succeeded in including the people of the region in the reform efforts and allowed them to contribute to the achievements of the programs. Like the Frontier Nursing Service, reform efforts were geared primarily towards women and both FNS and CAW worked to provide health care and assistance to women.

CAW worked to provide counseling and support for women in the hopes of protecting them from abuse and neglect. The group offered legal aid and job training to offer women independence. CAW differed in its approach to educating from the other groups mentioned in that it formed communication networks and brought a new awareness to those outside the region in its battle to provide not only knowledge of the region based on preconceived notion and misconception, but knowledge about the region (traditions, crafts, heritage, and history). Despite CAW's short existence, the group was able to open doors and creating opportunity for women in male-dominated fields and in classrooms. The diversity of programs offered allowed CAW to offer a wide range on programs by offering individualized assistance to women within the region. CAW addressed the needs of particular areas within Southern Appalachia rather than offering cookie-cutter assistance to a drastically diversified group. This approach meant offering information on black lung and mine safety to Kentucky residents, a region that relied heavily on coal mining, or offering job training and educational services in the mountains of Tennessee and Virginia. While the diversity in the services offered greatly benefited the

women in the region, it proved to be a daunting task for the organization's ability to continue to offer such services due to the variety, cost, and management of services.

The women of the Council on Appalachian Women were no different from the members of any other activist groups in that they spent their days interacting with other groups and organizations in the region, as well as outside the area, in order to improve the quality of life for all women throughout the region. The administrators and members of CAW wrote letters, and scheduled and participated in workshops and seminars ranging from sex education and spousal abuse to job training and drivers education. They lobbied government officials, conducted research, published pamphlets and research papers, scheduled talks and discussion groups, arranged for daycare and driver training courses, and worked to bring about change in the lives of women throughout the Appalachian region. The founders of CAW knew that in order for their program to meet the goals set forth in its initial proposal to ARC they would need to gain support from area organizations and form communication networks with other activist groups.

The council women served as mentors, counselors, and activists. The group focused its efforts on causes that would enhance the lives of women and a primary focus was the formation of a communication and support network that crossed state lines. Although CAW arrived late in the reform efforts that began during the early twentieth century and increased during and after the 1960s War on Poverty, it did something that few other groups had done; it focused its efforts on women. The initial thirty-five women who founded CAW worked to develop communication between Appalachian women and groups outside the region. This task of forming an effective communication network between various organizations proved to be very difficult because of the unique problems facing

such a large geographic region. Lack of funding and the requirement of the council to serve such a large geographic area proved to be overwhelming for the organization, but while in existence, the group served the women of the region and facilitated job training in areas such as construction, highway work, and heavy equipment operations.

The Council on Appalachian Women served to educate ‘outsiders’ to the traditions and changing roles in Appalachia in order to combat poverty and address the needs of the region. The organization disbanded due to internal conflict and disagreements among board members regarding the distribution of power. Despite limited funding and support, CAW participated in forums and published information regarding the Coal Employment Project, Mountain Women’s Exchange, Rural American Women, and the Appalachian Studies Association. CAW maintained communication with organizations such as the Washington Women’s Network, an organization that worked with Anne Allen in the Program Office for Public Welfare Foundation, a federal organization which offers grants for community economic development. CAW also communicated with Ingrid Annibale, Assistant to the Board Members for the National Labor Relations Board, as well as Barbara Bleichner, President of the National Women’s Education Fund. These connections allowed CAW to provide women in the region with employment information, legal assistance, and information regarding educational opportunities for women.²⁹

CAW’s work to break through barriers and provide information about opportunities for women to obtain adequate healthcare, job training, and knowledge regarding abuse, neglect, and life skills, established a legacy for women to break into “male-dominated fields,” obtain higher paying jobs, learn about harassment and discrimination, and fight for

²⁹ CAW Collection, Box 18, Folder 6, “National Women’s Conference, 1979-1980.”

a place in the changing world. The objectives of the Council on Appalachian women were simple. The group wanted to provide support, training, and assistance to women by developing and implementing effective programs created to assist women in Appalachia with childcare, financial assistance, job training, marriage and abuse counseling, infant mortality and health care concerns, and many other issues.³⁰ In order to facilitate the growth of these programs money and support were needed. Although CAW operated on a very limited budget and disbanded in May 1981, it was able to compile a resource directory, rally support for legislative bills effecting women, advocate for change, and offer support for women in the home, the workforce, the schools, and the community.³¹

Although the founders of CAW and the participants in the many seminars and forums hosted throughout the region have scattered, their interest in the region, their focus on educating, and their passion for enhancing the lives of women have remained unchanged. The group worked to provide a safe and nurturing support system for women in the region to gain something they had seldom been offered, opportunity. CAW provided women with the opportunity to acquire the skills and self-confidence needed to become leaders and role models for their daughters and granddaughters. CAW offered women in the region a goal, opportunity, and a sense of hope.

³⁰ For more information see, the following files that contain pertinent information regarding CAW activities: Box 1, Folders 1 – 13.

³¹ CAW Collection, Box 10, Folder 13, "Appalachian Community Services and Development, 1979."

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VITA

JULIE MARIE BLEVINS

Personal Data:

Date of Birth: September 25, 1972

Place of Birth: Elizabethton, Tennessee

Marital Status: Married

Education:

Public Schools, Roan Mountain, Tennessee

B.A. History, East Tennessee State University, Johnson
City, Tennessee 1995

M.A. Liberal Studies, East Tennessee State University,
Johnson City, Tennessee 2012

Professional Experience:

Executive Assistant, East Tennessee State University,
Johnson City, Tennessee 2002 – 2012

Library Assistant, East Tennessee State University,
2000 – 2002